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VVILDERNES
OF
TROUBLE,

Leading to a
Canaan of Comfort.

OR

The Method and Manner of God's dealing with the Heirs of Heaven in the Ministry of the Word.

Wherein is shewed,

How the Lord brings them into this Trouble, supporteth them under it; and delivereth them out of it: So that none finally miscarry.

By W. CROMPTON, Minister
of the Gospel.

Hos. 6. 1. *He hath torn and he will heal us, he hath smitten and he will bind us up.*

L O N D O N,

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To his Honoured Friend

Mr. *JOHN MARN,*

Of the City of *EXON,*

MERCHANT.

T*Hat there is a Summum Bonum, or chief Good to be enjoyed by Man, all sorts acknowledg; Philosophers and Divines, Ancient and Modern. Desired by all (as naturally as the greatest flames and the little sparks of Fire ascend to their Sphere) either confusedly, or distinctly; attained only by some, and in the fruition whereof, true Happiness consisteth. But what that is, all agree not. Varro out of Philosophers, and St. Augustin out of Varro, maketh mention of two hundred eighty and eight Opinions about it. Some placing it here, others there, and have accordingly pursued their own conceits. Error in this Point is not more common than dangerous, being attended with variety of Uncertainties; every one striving to maintain, what he doth most affect: whether an independing real-Good, apprehended*

The Epistle

ended and presented, by an Understanding rightly informed, or an apparent Good only, offered by an Erring faculty. Sense and understanding in Act, is by union between the Faculty and the Object; the Soul is said to be what it understandeth; if the Object be a real Good, the Soul by virtue of that union, hath an answerable denomination. In this, Philosophy is an insufficient Guide, looking only on this Life, and the felicity of the more ignoble part of Man, during his abode here in the Visible World. A supernatural Revelation is needful. Reason cannot fathom, nor the light of Nature reach unto the end for which Man was made. Divinity discovers this, and Faith comprehends it; That Man was created for God, to be like and enjoy him. Christ is the Means to bring this to pass. Man is made perfect, but mutable. He falleth, Christ steppeth in to raise him again. A new Covenant is established, whereof Christ as Head, undertakes to perform Conditions. The Humane Nature must be united to the Divine, in his Person, that Christ might suffer what Man had deserved, and Man might receive what Christ merited. The Hypostatical Union is the ground or medium of another Mystical Union, whereby every Penitent Believer is made a partaker of the Divine Nature, and of all the privileges of Christ's Obedience, as if they had done it in their own Persons; as, of Adaption, Justification, Sanctification, Glory. The End was first, the Reasonable Creature thought on next, and the

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the Means last. All which were foreseen and ordered by an eternal Act of the first Cause; not that for this, or this after that; not the Means first, for the End, nor the End so first, as a motive to the Means; but the End, Object, and Means together, according to the freedom and counsel of his Will; foreseeing still to preserve an order in the means, both of Precedency, and instrumental Efficiency. He willed the Law and Gospel should be Preached, that Knowledge and Faith might be wrought in his; he willed Faith, that they might be justified; he willed Justification, that they might be sanctified and glorified. He willed all these joyntly, that the End might be attained after all, viz. The Communication of his own Excellency, for the compleating of Man's Felicity.

It is not these Titles therefore, can make Man happy. The line of his Life being drawn forth with so many uncertainties, and the height of his Power laid on so weak a foundation. At one time or other, of the best it may be said, and the greatest on Earth may say of himself, I was all things, and yet nothing, part of the Emperor Severus his Speech to his Council and Captains at York, where shortly after he died; leaving behind him this Testimony, as many others have have done, That Man's chiefest Good is not here below. The Earth in her most glittering furniture is but Earth, Fabulous and Enthusiastick, and can afford but brittle Happiness. Honour, Riches, Pleasure, are but deceitful Toys: So far from being Man's happiness, that they often prove greater

The Epistle

letts than helps towards Happiness. Our chiefest good is Bonum immobile & immutabile: but Riches make themselves Wings, and are uncertain; like the Swallow in Winter season, suddenly bidding farewell, never perhaps returning again; as a word once spoken, nescit vox missa reverti. Our chief Good is Bonum æternum & perfectum; while Carnal Pleasures, even the deepest here, are most empty, frothy, and momentary; like Comets made fat with smoaks and vapours of the Earth, and in stead of giving Light and Brightness, they bring forth Murders and Contagions. Our chief Good is Bonum Immortale; firm and ever flourishing, always the same; but Honour is fading, and often buried in the Dust, or quickly swallowed up in Oblivion. Man was happy by Creation, while the prime faculties of the Soul had that blissful Object to reflect upon the true God יְהוָה, in whom only is found a satisfying sufficiency, to fill unto contentment, the infinite appetite of the Soul. When man turned from the Creator to the Creature, he lost a real for a seeming Happiness; on this happy, that the footsteps to true Happiness are left imprinted in the Fall: Let him but once think whence he is fallen, and return, and he cannot miss of Happiness. No regaining it without returning. Return, return, O Shulamite, return. How often and earnest doth the Lord call for it, as that one Thing necessary, which should be most intended by us? How vain and empty is the Creature? How full and solid
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the Creator? Deformity in the one, Beauty in the other; Bitterness in this, Sweetness in that. To fear God, and keep his Commandments, is the whole of Man: The Duty and Dignity, Honour and Felicity of Man; to know Thee, and whom thou hast sent, is Eternal Life: In his Presence is fulness of Joy, and at his Right Hand are Pleasures for evermore. In him are all the Perfections of all Creatures by way of Eminency; Quicquid convenit enti quatenus ens; illud maximè competere in primum ens, quod est Deus: Who may be enjoyed, either by Faith, properly termed Felicity here in the Way; or by Sense, in our Country, more fitly called Beatitude. Here is a short and sure Way, return to God by Christ, and be happy for ever. How this is brought about, and how it may be discerned, is the subject of the following Discourses; unto which I have taken leave to prefix your Name; and by this poor way endeavoured to serve you, since more ample Demonstrations are wanting to my weak Abilities. Not doubting but your Noble Disposition will be satisfied with such ordinary Acknowledgments, I commend you to the Blessing of Heaven, and remain,

Eph. 1. 10.
Col. 2. 10.

Your Servant in Christ,

W. CROMPTON.

ADVERTISEMENT.

The Author being very remote from the
Press, and not having seen the Sheets,
'tis likely some Errata's have escaped,
which the Reader is entreated to Correct,
or Pardon.

Your servant in Christ,

IN COMMISSION.



HOSEA 2. 14.

Therefore, behold I will allure her, and bring her into the WilderNESS, and speak comfortably unto her.

THis, with the rest of the Chapter, is no *National* History, limited to the *Body*, as some temporal Felicity, conveyed in a Promise to that People; but an *Evangelical* Prophecy, extended to the *Soul*, discovering the means, and assuring everlasting Beatitude to the Church, as under Grace. True it is, and from the Letter of the Text we may gather, that God was good and bountiful to *Israel*; but ungrateful *Israel* abused God's bounty. [As the fed *Hawk* forgets his Master, and as the Full Moon gets farthest from the Sun; so they forgot God, and wickedly departed from him; like ill Grounds, they cast up Thorns where Roses were planted; they printed the steps of Sin upon Divine Clemency]. Which moved the Lord to deprive her of his Blessings, and to send her into Captivity, by absence to learn

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the worth of his Presence, and to take good leave and leisure to bewail her own Folly. [What can he do less than forget them, so they may remember him?] Where being oppress'd, and disconsolate, as a mourning Widow, bereft of Friends, and means to relieve her, she returns upon her self, and complains unto God, who saw her Tears, heard her Cries, and brought her from *Babylon* to *Canaan*, turned all her sighing into singing, and made her rejoice on that Bed which had soaked in Tears, and made to swim again, like *David*, *Psal.* 6. 6. Repentance can turn Crosses into Comforts, and like the Philosophers stone, make Golden Afflictions. But all this was for a further intent and purpose, even to set forth their Sin, spiritual Bondage, and the manner of Conversion. Under that, this was meant. And so the words are to be taken with the best Interpreters of the manner of God's dealing in the dispensation of his Grace to all in Covenant with him.

The ordinary Method which he observeth in bestowing Grace upon Men converted after actual Sins, is here fully discovered.

First, He convinceth all those of their Sins, & that distinctly and thoroughly, whom he intends to convert; as the skilful Chirurgeon searcheth that Wound to the bottom, which he labours to heal. This may be gathered from the 2, 4, 5 vers. *Plead with your Mother, plead; for she is not my Wife, neither am I her Husband.*

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Let her therefore put away her Whoredoms out of her Sight, &c. As if the Lord should take a Prodigal aside, and say, These and these, O Man, are thy Sins, thy Wantonness and Uncleanliness, thy Oaths and Lies, thy Pride and Covetousness; thus it is with thee; *thou art the Man*, that hast abused my Blessings, profaned my Ordinances, and mispent thy time, and which is worst of all, hast often refused Grace so seriously offered: stay now, and consider it, *what will be the end hereof?* [God's Word is not like a Shadow, which representeth obscurely and confusedly; but as a Glass, or rather a Picture, which setteth forth things in their distinct Lineaments]. Which Conviction is begun and finished, in part by the Law, and in part by the Gospel, as in the Sequel will appear.

Secondly; He threatneth and denounceth deserved Judgments, if they still persist and go on in their sinful Practices; in vers. 6, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13. *Therefore, behold I will budg up thy Way with Thorns, and make a Wall, that thou shalt not find her Path: Therefore will I remove, and take away my Corn in the time thereof, &c.* i. e. Except thou accept of Grace, now in this thy day, except thou repent and turn to me, I will pursue thee with variety of Rods, both private and public, and will never leave thee, till thou be amended or confounded. It is Sin and Obstinacy that putteth Thunder-bolts into God's hand, and provoketh him

to do his Work, his *strange Work*; and to bring to pass his Act, his *strange Act*.

Thirdly; He proceedeth to some melting Promises, in the 14 *vers.* and others following; like Sun-shine after a boisterous Storm, or some purling Dew after a wasting heat, or refreshing Spring after a nipping Winter. The *Sun of Righteousness* never loves to set in a Cloud. *I will give her the Valley of Achor for a Door of Hope: I will make a Covenant for them with the Beasts of the Field, &c.* The meaning whereof is thus much: If both the former ways, *viz.* of Conviction and Affliction, shall prove ineffectual, (as indeed they would, if the Lord should leave them there, and go no further,) if neither prevail to bring thee home unto me, rather than thou shouldst remain still in the State of Nature, or in the *Wilderness* of Legal Terror, but *almost* converted; or else after thy Confirmation of a League and Covenant with me, shouldst totally and finally apostatize; I will take the whole Business into my own hand, and go one step further with thee, using such means as work infallibly, and never fail: *I will allure her into the Wilderness, &c.*

Wherein are three things to be explained, all tending to the Confirmation of the Proposition laid down in the beginning, *viz.*

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The Certainty of the Work here intended; [*I will allure her, and I will speak to her*].

The Lord is serious in his Offer of Grace, and infallible in working it at one time or other, for the Conversion of all those in Covenant with him. Though it be full of difficulty, yet it is certain for success. It is *difficult*, therefore the Lord undertakes it, when no other means is able to do it; and *certainly* it shall be done in his time and way. Therefore he promiseth and annexeth certain binding Particles, the more to assure it in our apprehension, *לכו חנה* *Therefore, behold*, which Particles are diversly construed by divers great Divines, not unskilful in the holy Tongue, causing *some* obscurity about the meaning, but *more* touching the Connection of these with the former words; what dependance they have, and what Grammatical Construction they may admit. Some take and understand them here *casually* only, as if their profaneness and stubbornness in Idolatry, had been the moving cause to this Evangelical Work; but then it would follow, *Let us sin, that Grace may abound*. Which Devils Logic the Apostle confuteth, *Rom. 6*. Others take them

illatively, thus: Seeing she is grown to that height of Wickedness, so vile and so proud, that there is no hope nor possibility of her thinking or willing by any strength of her own to return, therefore I will make her mindful and willing to come home: [O the never enough adored Depth of God's free Grace and super-abundant Love to his People!] I will heal them, and lead them also, and restore Comforts unto them. This cannot be misliked. Only a third sort may be adjoined, *viz.* of those who take them *adversatively* also, denoting the Order in any business, as *διότι* in Greek, and *postea* in Latin; and then the meaning is, as if the Lord had said, Seeing the former means doth it not, I will assay another; I will add my Spirit to her Affliction, and to corporal Rods I will bring in spiritual Troubles, to the Law, the Gospel; which shall not fail of my proposed end. *Therefore, behold,* in the last place, I will undertake to do it verily, truly, undoubtedly.

Here are several useful Doctrines arising, worthy observation. *Viz.*

Doct. 1. *That the Lord can and doth turn great Sinners into eminent Saints.*

He turns a Wilderness into a River. As in several Changes in the World, Stars fall from the Firmament, to be changed into Dunghills; so here, the Dunghills of the Earth mount up to

to Heaven, to be metamorphosed into Stars. So much he promiseth to do ; and it is usual with him to advance them highest in his favour, who have been least esteemed in the World. *Not many wise Men after the flesh, nor many mighty, nor many noble ; but God hath chosen the foolish things of the World to confound the wise,* 1 Cor. i. 26, 27. Christ's Disciples were not fetch'd from among the Roman Conquerors ; no *Augustus*, or *Alexander*, or high noble Blood of the Earth gave denomination to their Pedigree ; neither took they their Rise from among the *Jewish Rabbins*. They were not seasoned with *Athenian Eloquence*, nor beautified with any gay and splendid matters of this World. They were obscured with Poverty, and shadowed with meanness, in respect of Name and Gifts, of a poor contemptible Trade, even *Fishermen*, called from catching of Fish, to lay out for Souls. The Lord cutteth out his *Mercuries* of the most unlikely pieces of Timber, he will have his Temple built of rough and unpolish'd Stones. When *Jerusalem* was in such misery, that she could not help her self, no more than a poor Infant, and for others they would not, *Ezek.* 16. 5. *No eye pitied her, to do any thing for her, or to have any compassion upon her ; Then I passed by (saith the Lord,) and looked upon thee, &c.* Lo here, Heaven smiled upon *Hell* ! An old broken Instrument is tuned, and made melodious ; tho' it be the same

String, yet it is quite otherwise tuned. *Hath not God chosen the Poor of this World?* Jam. 2. 5. He hides Treasure under the Bark and Mantle of mean Persons, base and abject in appearance. The lost Sheep, and sick Men, as they have most need, both in truth, and in their own apprehension, so have they most benefit by the Physician. Did not our Saviour tell the Priests and Elders among the *Jews*, that notwithstanding all their Traditions and Ceremonies, Publicans and Harlots would believe sooner, and enter the Kingdom of Heaven before them? Mat. 21. 31. And that many should come from the East and West, to sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, in the Kingdom of Heaven; when the Children of the Kingdom (who had so good conceit of themselves, as if out of danger,) should be cast into utter Darkness? Manasses did evil in the sight of the Lord, like the abominations of the Heathen; he built the high Places and strange Altars, he observed Times, 2 Chron. 33. 3, 4, 5, 6. Yet the Lord brought him home at length through this Wilderness into Canaan. Mary Magdalen was a None-such of uncleanness, she was possess'd with seven Devils; yet Christ cast them out, and of a Den of Devils made her a Temple for the Holy Spirit to dwell in. St. Paul was a Blasphemer, a Persecutor, mounted in his way to *Damascus*, to hale the poor Christians to Prison; but the Lord had chosen him, and now changes the Serpent into a white Rod.

Rod. St. *Austin* was greatly infected with the Sin of his Country, which was as contagious for Chastity, as the North Wind for Plants; for a great Writer, speaking of *Afric*, saith it was a *Country of Loves*, and that it was as strange a Man should be an *African*, and not be an *African*; as to be an *African*, and not to be *lascivious*. He had a Soul as it were of Sulphur, so much was it disposed to take fire, that he hastened to throw himself into the midst of Flames. In short, he fell into the Snares he desired, and was involved in wonderful Labyrinths, where the end of one sinful Passion was the beginning of another. But behold here an admirable sport of Providence, way-laying and contriving the Salvation of this great Soul, who became a rare Spectacle, and worthy the consideration of noble Spirits; for of an earthen Pot he is made a Vessel of Gold.

Luther (in whose Conversion the Divine Power was most resplendent) of a mad Monk, as he called himself, was made a zealous Protestant. *Basilides* was sometimes a cruel Executioner of Christians, that afterwards was called, and died for the *Testimony of Jesus*.

Aretius speaks of a certain Man in his time, (it is no feigned Story, saith he, for I saw the Man with my own eyes) who was a vile desperate Sinner, a Drunkard, Swearer, wanton, &c. and so continued for many years;

years; but at length God brought him into the Wilderness, where he laid down the flowery Crowns which he bare on his Head, his Drunkenness, and unthrifty Riots, and enkindled with zeal to God, lived holily, and died comfortably.

Not to mention others, who converted from a dissolute, prophane Conversation, found Mercy, and became eminent Instruments in the Church of God. Few experienced Christians, Divines especially, but can add Instances of their own Observation, how strangely the Lord hath turned Men from Wantonness to Chastity, from Drunkenness to Sobriety, from common Swearing to fear an Oath; even then when they were running in a violent and delightful motion towards Hell.

Now, why the Lord suffers his own to run out so far before he reclaim them, we may with reverence and submission conceive it is,

First, for the declaration of his own Goodness, both in regard of his wonderful Power, and absolute Freedom.

Of his *Power*, effecting this in some without any ordinary means, as he dealt with *Abraham* and *Paul*; in others by weak and unlikely means, as by the Ministry of poor Fisher-men, preaching the Cross: [The great God out of small Acorns brings up huge Oaks, and usually hangs great weights on little Wires, whereby he sets out to the view of
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all the splendor of his Omnipotent Agency.]
 And in a third sort, he doth it against all ordinary means ; as when he occasions Conversion by some Sin, Affliction, or Persecution : as the curious Alchymist doth by his Skill extract Gold and Silver out of baser Metals ; and as the wise Physician correcteth poysonful Ingredients, and maketh them Medicinal.

And as of his *Power*, so of his *absolute Freedom*, to do what he will with his own, dispensing his Grace, both when, to whom, and how he will ; passing by the Great, Rich, Learned, (Stars of the first magnitude, or the greatest Letters of the Alphabet,) and civil Formalists of the World, to pitch on poor, mean, and ignorant Wretches. Where Sin hath abounded, Grace doth super-abound, *Surgunt indocti, & rapiunt Cælum* &c. as *Augustin* speaks ; the *Kingdom of Heaven* suffers violence from the poor lost Sheep ; while others puffed up with their conceited Riches, of Knowledg and Holiness, dreaming of Self-sufficiency, are kept out, and thrust down into Hell. If he should do otherwise, and call only those, in whose Policy and Life could be seen some outward Goodness to shine forth, Men would believe what some cannot forbear to say, that it is the work of Men that obliges God to call them ; and if in rigour they be not worthy of this Favour, they merit it at least in a seemliness of Equity and Congruity,
 as

as they speak of it in the Schools of Rome. And therefore further, we may conceive it is to proclaim the *Freeneſs* of his Grace; no natural Abilities can merit it, nor any Sin hinder the beſtowing of it. *The Wind bloweth where it liſteth.* *Nos ſolemus eligere digniores, at Deus ut oſtendat ſuam electionem non ex noſtris meritis, ſed ex ſolâ ſua gratiâ fieri, ſolitus eſt indigniores eligere,* Zanch. i. e. Men chuſe the moſt worthy, but the Lord chuſeth the moſt unworthy; to ſhew that his Choice is not grounded on our Merits, but on his own free Grace.

Secondly; It is for the Inſtruction of the Church. And ſo,

1. That no Fleſh ſhould glory in his Preſence, but that the Glory might be wholly aſcribed to the Lord, whoſe only work it muſt needs be acknowledged in ſuch *Libertines*. There is nothing to merit, nor any preventing Abilities ſtirring, to ſhare with the Lord in this Work. And indeed the Lord's power is moſt manifeſt in reclaiming ſuch wild Prodigals, in waſhing ſuch Blackmoors, & changing ſuch Leopards. *Digitus Dei!* All that ſee and hear, may wonder and ſay, It is the Finger of God; or (as *Protopogenes* ſaid of a curious Line, which he ſaw drawn in a Painter's Shop, None but *Apelles* could draw this,) none but God could do this. It is a Work worthy of none, but of him who can do what he will, and will do what he hath purpoſed. This is indeed the great Miracle of the World,

to change Lions into Lambs, Sinks into Fountains, Thorns into Roses. Mercy is never so resplendent as over Misery. The Ice of Winter makes the Beauty of the Spring; Darkness contributes to the Lustre of Light; nor is the Sun more bright, than after an Eclipse: Thus Grace, which is the Splendor of Eternal Light, makes it self to be seen in more triumph, where it hath subdued most Iniquity. And Praise will be more fully ascribed to him, by such as could deserve no favour, both occasionally and practically. *Occasionally*, in regard of others, who are stirred up thereby to admire his Power, to magnify his Love, and to hope for acceptance upon their unfeigned submission: And *practically*, in respect of themselves, who are commonly more humble and thankful, zealous and watchful ever after.

Observe such as have drank deep of the deceitful Cup of Rebellion and Prodigality, and after come to taste of the bitter Potion of sound Humiliation, and say, whether you do not find them of an excellent temper? *Paul* being made sensible of himself, as the greatest of Sinners, how passionately doth he break forth to admire the Love and Mercy of God! *I was a Blasphemer, a Persecutor, and injurious; but by the Grace of God I am what I am.* And this Grace bestowed upon me was not in vain, but I laboured more abundantly, &c. Where you see his diligence in redeeming the Time, and ascri-

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bing his Change wholly to the Grace of God.

2. That none in the Church should despair, especially among those in whom the Offer of Mercy hath stirred up any desire after Grace. This Reason is rendred by the Apostle, *1 Tim. 1. 16. For this cause I obtained Mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might shew forth all Long-suffering, for a Pattern to them which should after believe on him to Life everlasting.* He that seemed to be an Epitome, an Abridgment of all Wickedness, obtained Mercy for this cause, that Jesus Christ might *shew forth all Long-suffering*, i. e. evidence by full demonstration, so that all might see, and say, There is Mercy with Christ that he may be feared, yea, Mercy rejoycing over Judgment. Though your Sins be in number like a Cloud, and for quality, like Crimson or Scarlet, Yet come, let us reason together, saith the Lord, and I will make them white as Snow or Wool: Yea, they shall be as tho they had never been. Sin is finite in respect of matter, but Divine Mercy is infinite. The Consideration of this Disproportion should be a powerfull Loadstone to draw Sinners to Repentance, it should be as a Cork to the Net, to keep the Heart from sinking into despair, it should be an Antidote to keep that Poison from entering, or at least, from lodging in the Heart. If Manasse, Saul, Mary Magdalen, and some of the adulterous drunken Corinthians, were remembered in
Mercy,

Mercy, converted, sanctified, and saved, why should any despair? When Man hath withstood his Good, and the *Gates of Hell* have prevailed a long time, even then the Lord's hand hath done it for many, blessed be his Name. We had never heard of these Examples, had it not been for our encouragement. With this let the penitent Heart be encouraged. [God can turn a noisom Dung-hil into a Mine of Gold Brands of Hell into lightsom Stars in his Firmament, Slaves of Demons into Angels]: But without presumption, lest abused Mercy give place to rejecting Fury, and the Lord say, *Because I have called, and ye refused, I have stretched out mine hand, and no Man regarded: Therefore now, tho you call upon me, I will not answer; and tho you seek me early, you shall not find me.*

3. That the Hearts of all reasonable Creatures, capable of such a Myllery, might be enlarged to rejoyce in God for his Goodness, and to praise him, who by plucking such Brands out of the Fire, doth manifest such Love and Power, to free and defend his chosen Ones from the devouring Mouth of the roaring Lion? The *lost Sheep* being found, the wild Prodigal returned, first home to himself, and after to his Father, occasion Joy in the Families; to teach us what we should do upon the Conversion of any prophane Person, Son, Daughter, Servant, or Neighbour. Was he once proud, and is he now humble?

humble? Was he once intemperate, and is he now sober? was he dead in Sin, and is he now alive through Grace? It is most singular Mercy, rich Love, it is meet we should be merry. The Lord hath, doth, and will deliver, that the Church may be encouraged, Satan enraged by the loss of his Prey, and the Name of Christ glorified and magnified so much the more.

A second Doctrine to be noted by the way, is this: *Viz.*

Doct. 2. *That the Lord often useth variety of means to attain one end.*

Many Messengers to call home his straying Servants unto him. Sickness of Body, with variety of Afflictions, sometimes depriving them of good things, sometimes laying heavy Rods upon them. He useth Fire and Steel to cure those Mad-men, rather than comply with their Malady, to render it incurable. His own Word he sends, both in Tharnings to terrify, and Promises to allure; and the Spirit followeth upon both, to make them effectual. Some of these means prepare the Subject, others work the Cure; the second beginning where the first leaveth; all so knit and ordered, that they make up but one integral mean to produce such an end. It is the Lord's Patience and Wisdom so to deal with

with froward Man, no want of power; he could do it by few and weak means; as great Ships are turned by a small Helm, and as some say, stopped by a very little Remore, yea, without any; but it is Man's frowardness that requires this variety of means. To bring home, and keep the Jews, his first beloved People, in Order and Safety, he planted a Vineyard, fenced it, and gathered out the Stones, *Isa. 5. 2.* He bowed them by his Prophets, sending them early and late. *Hosea 6. 4.* He laid his Hand upon them, so that the Head was sick, and the whole Heart faint, *Isa. 1. 6.* Concluding, when none of these prevailed, O Ephraim, what shall I do unto thee? O Judah, how shall I persuade thee? *Hos. 6. 4.* Which is as if God should say, I have done mine utmost, and more than you can challenge from me. And the like expository Expressions of complaint are to be found in many other places. And this the Lord doth:

Reas. 1. To set forth the Riches of his Mercy, and Greatness of his Love, not willing that Men should perish, but rather return and live, *Ezek. 33. 11.* *2 Pet. 3. 9.* God might have dealt with us as with the Angels, who were the eldest Off-spring of his Love, the purest production of that Supreme Light: no Mercy interposed to avert or suspend their Judgment, but they were immediately expell'd the Divine Presence, and left

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without remedy ; *Heb. 8. 16. To which of them hath he appointed a Word of Reconciliation?* And again, *He took not upon him the Nature of Angels.* But, O Goodness Divine ! he made sudden way for our recovery ; high Mountains were levell'd, and great Depths fill'd up, that we might arrive at Happiness. He had Bowels only melting over lost Man. As it is with a tender-hearted Father towards his weak and sick Child ; he desires the continuance of his Life, and if it were in his power, with some of his own Blood to give him health ; he looks and sighs, he weeps and complains, *O my Son, what shall I do for thee?* To the opinion of one, he adds the Consultation of many Physicians ; he makes use of this Receipt, and applies that Remedy, and all to try what may do him good. Thus, but in a more transcendent manner (removing Passion and Imperfection, Ignorance and Weakness found in Man) conceive of God. *Is Ephraim my dear Son ? Is he a pleasant Child ? Jer. 31. 20. Since I spake against him, I do earnestly remember him, my Bowels are troubled for him, I will surely have mercy upon him. And, Why will ye die, ye House of Israel ? And again, O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, how often would I have gathered thee ? &c.*

Reas. 2. It is to leave all without excuse. Men shall have nothing to say, but justify God when he speaketh. *Judg I pray you between me and my Vineyard, Isa. 5. 3, 4. What could*

could I have done more to my Vineyard, than I have done? Where the Lord clears himself from all Objections and Repinings whatsoever. And it is, as if the Lord had said, *What fault can be found in me, after so much care and waiting?* Or, as some render it better, *What is now more to be done in so desperate a case?* but what he answers in ver. 5. but to *take away the Hedge, &c.* Nothing can be alledged as an Error in him, unless that he hath done so much as he had done, as good Authors paraphrase that Text.

Reas. 3. To instruct his Ambassadors, how they should carry themselves towards a proud, ignorant, gainsaying People; to try all means, to use all lawful ways, and to *become all things to all Men*, if it may be possible to save some, that they *may gain them*, 1 Cor. 9. 21. A Metaphor taken from Merchants, who are never weary of taking Money. It is their Duty, if the Lord be so patient and diligent, be *instant in season and out of season*; i. e. tho it be to their Loss in other things, as Calvin and Estius have it; and tho the People on the worse side should think it *unseasonable*, like Snow in Harvest; yet be doing, as often as there is any opportunity or hope of doing good. Ministers must be frequent and resolute, now to thunder in the Threatnings of the Law, and then to shine upon troubled Minds in the Promises of the Gospel. It is their Duty to be resident and diligent among
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their People, so that they may feed them with Alms, good Example, and wholsom Doctrine. Yea, and last of all, to add Patience to their Pains. Learn of the Husbandman, after ploughing, sowing, harrowing, guttering, & weeding, &c. he waits for Heaven's Dew and Sun : so must Ministers, *meekly instructing* those which oppose themselves, if God peradventure will give them Repentance, [by any means, at any time] to the acknowledging of the Truth.

Caution.

Yet first, Let none hereupon presume to live in Sin, and to mis-spend younger years vainly, upon this Ground. See what will follow, if you so do. Either you may be cut off even for that Sin of Presumption, & perish, before you come to be converted. As *Milo Crotoniates*, who was tearing asunder the Stock of an Oak, his Strength failed him, and the Stock closing, was held so fast by the hands, that he became a Prey to the Beasts of the Field : So may all the Abusers of Mercy become a Prey to the Justice of God, that will rend and tear them in pieces, ere they are aware of it. If God's *to day* be too soon for thy Repentance, thy *to morrow* may be too late for his Acceptance. It is said by some, and justly feared by others, that many are now in Hell, who had such confused purposes and hopes, that they would and should be converted, but the time was not yet come ; their

Hearts

Fancies were fill'd with fair Promises, while they suffered their Hearts to be carried away with the current of their unmortified Concupiscence. Or, if not so, yet the longer you go on in Sin, by so much the heavier, painful, and difficult, will your turning be. Old Sins, like an old Oak, are hardly to be removed. *Can a Man be born again when he is old?* Where Satan pleads Antiquity, he usually pleads Propriety. And 'tis well known, the longer the Poison stayeth in the Stomach the more mortal it is. As a Disease, the longer it groweth, the harder will the Cure be; or as it is in a Journey, the further we go out of the way, the more Toil and Time will be required ere we get in again. *Rejoice, O young Man, and play the Prodigal; yet know, for all this, God will bring thee to Judgment.* Then thou must turn again by weeping Cross, or never enter Heaven. Old Sinners are rare Converts. Grace is seldom grafted on such withered Stocks. Who can expect Water from a drained River? The common Proverb is true, As is a Man's Life, so is his Death; a wicked Life, a cursed Death.

2. Let no Man judg his Brother, touching his final Estate. What he is at present, you may say; but what he will be, you cannot. Mount not into God's Chair; judg nothing before the time. It is the Office of Angels to sever *Sheep* from the *Goats*, the *Tares* from the *Wheat*. Those that undertake peremptorily

to determine of Mens final Estates, they know not what Spirit they are of; with the Sons of Zebedee, they take too much upon them; with the Sons of Levi, they understand not what they say, or whereof they affirm, with those Impostors in *Timothy*. Indeed, it is a kind of Apostacy and Rebellion against God's Providence, to judg without calling God to be a President into our Council. As was intimated before; we may judg the Tree by its Fruit, leaving the final Doom to the Searcher of all Hearts; censure him for the present to be God's Enemy, and in a most wretched Estate; but leave him under the charitable Influence of Heaven. Suppose thy Neighbour be now *wild*, he may hereafter be *tamed*; he is now *unclean*, hereafter he may be *washed*, as the *Corinthians* were; he is now *intemperate*, he may be *sober*; there is Blood and Merit enough in Christ. Of great Sinners the Lord hath and can make great Saints, to be so much the more zealous for God in his Service, as they have been desperately mad and furious in the service of their own Lusts. Let all Men in hope attend upon all Means constantly; if one Means work not, another may; if it work not now, it may anon. Who knoweth what a day may bring forth? Neglect no Means, delay no Duty, and still remember to crave God's blessing upon all. For as it followeth in a third Observation,

Doct: 3. *No secondary Means can avail to mark Grace, without a concurrence of the first Cause.*

Means are used for the reducing of *Israel*, Prophets were sent, and divers Rods laid up on them; yet the Lord addeth, *I will allow her.* Without his helping hand there is no success to be expected. Means cannot turn or encline themselves to our help, unless God turn, encline, and command them. If God do not act and use them, the Instruments can do nothing. It was not the Clay and the Spittle that cured the blind Man, but Christ's anointing his eyes with them. What Music can the Organ Pipes make without breath? *Paul may plant, and Apollas may water; but God giveth the increase.* The reason is, because they are not natural Agents, working by inherent Virtue, but ordained thereunto, and qualified by an higher hand. He that chose them, maketh them effectual. According as God is pleased to work, or not to work: so they prove Assistances, or not Assistances to us. All the means in the World, in themselves considered, are but as a Mill, which grinds not the Corn, unless the Wind come to it; or like a Dial, on which if the Sun shine, it may direct us, but if the Sun lies under a Cloud, it is of no present use to us: So if God hold off from the means, if he breath not up-

on them, and cast not a lively Influence into them; they can do nothing for us. Means are not absolute Lords of their own Operations, but subordinate Agents, and depend upon God, as for being, so for operation or restraint. As a Master, that puts a rich Cabinet of Jewels into his Servant's Chamber, but keepeth the Key himself; none of the Jewels can be given out, but by his will and appointment: In like manner, God hath put an aptness in the means to do us good, yet himself keeps the Key, to give out according to to his good pleasure.

Unde tanta virtus Aquæ, ut Corpus tangat, & Cor ablumat, nisi faciente Verbo? Whence hath Water such power, by touching the Body to wash the Heart, but from the Word? *Aug.*

Hence it may be concluded,
 I. That all Means must be used. We have God himself for a Pattern: he could enlighten us without the Sun, and afford Fruit without the Earth; but he will have his creatures operate; and so we are commanded to serve Divine Providence, and to leave the Issue to him. Man goes not to Heaven, as the Ship moves in the Tide, whether the Master sleeps or wakes. We must with the skilful Mariner, have our Eyes on the Stars, and our Hands on the Stern. Provided still, that the right means be used, hearing of the Word preached, Receipt of the Sacraments, Meditation, and Prayer, that the Lord would be pleased

pleased graciously to add his Influence, that thereby Grace may be begun, and strengthened in the several Acts thereof; because the Lord will not work by any means but such as are of his own appointment. *Naaman* must be cleansed by washing in *Jordan*, a River in *Israel*; not in *Abana* or *Parphar*, Rivers in *Damascus*. Now the forementioned means are of the Lord's appointment, as may be read in *Isa.* 55. 3. *Rom.* 10. 17. 2 *Tim.* 2. 7. *Jam.* 1. 5. And as you must use the right, so you must be careful to use them as Means, that is,

First; Subordinately, with respect to the Lord, upon whose hand and blessing the whole depends.

2dly. *Regularly*, with respect to those Directions set down in Scripture, which are principally such as follow, *viz.*

1. *Diligently*, both in regard of frequency of Action, and fervency of Spirit; as Men are diligent in such matters whereby their Lives might be preserved. To this is the Promise made, *Ask, seek, knock.* Such a diligent Hand maketh rich. *Be steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the Work of the Lord.* Therefore *David* prays, *Quicken us, O Lord, that we may call upon thy Name,* *Psal.* 80. 18. Therefore we have *Line upon Line, Precept upon Precept*, to provoke our diligence. A Neglect, or careless use of the means, is little better in the sight of God, than contempt of
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the means, yea, of Himself. *He that despiseth you, despiseth me.*

2. *Opportunely*, and seasonably. Every one hath his day, there is an acceptable hour, when the Lord will be entreated, while God calls and waits, while Grace is dispensed. Days of Grace have their dates. *The Vision is for an appointed time*, Hab. 2. 3. What the Prophet said of the Prophetical Vision, may be said of other Divine Dispensations. The Means of Grace have their Limits. *Prov. 1. 24. Because I called, and ye refused, &c. Therefore will I laugh at your Calamity, &c.* Whosoever steps in when the Angel moves the Waters, shall be healed. Neglect not any opportunity, as many do. The Loss of Opportunity is an irrecoverable Loss. Say not, we shall meet with enough hereafter; a day past cannot be recalled. Every thing is *beautiful in its season*. God takes delays for refusals. *Saul* lost his Kingdom, by not discerning his Time. *Archimedes* drew lines so long in the dust, till his City was taken, and the Souldiers brake in upon him, and slew him: So many that have thoughts of Repentance lose their precious Souls by sinful delays. Consider the *foolish Virgins*, and be wise. Let not such a Sun set on Earth, by the beams of which you should walk to Heaven.

3. *Entirely*; submitting to all means of Salvation, even those which to human Reason seem weak and mean, yea, contrary to our

proud

proud Capacities, and the bent of our Affections. He that will be saved, must deny his own Will, crucify his own Affections, capivate his own Imaginations, resign up his own Desire and Pleasure, give up his Heart as a Blank, that God may write down what he shall please. Man must not be *Funambulus Virtutum*, to use *Tertulian's* Phrase, go in a narrow Tract of Obedience, pick and chuse what he will do, and what not; follow God only in such Duties as will suit with himself, and no further. There must be an illimited Resolution for all the ways of Salvation. To slight any, is to slight the Author.

4. It must be sincerely and constantly used in obedience to God's command, leaving the Lord free for time and measure. Confine not the Holy one, no not in your thoughts or desire. Limit him not to time or means, [*Deus non alligat gratiam Sacramentis*] further than he is pleased to confine and limit himself. It was a bold carriage of *Popilius*, the Roman Ambassador, towards *Antiochus*, when he drew a Circle round about him, and bad him give answer ere he stirred out of it, for he would be put off no longer. Men are more bold than welcom to God, who dare to set him bounds, where he hath left himself free. Learn to wait for him; *you shall reap, if you faint not*. Attend in the morning, and absent not thyself at evening; thou knowest not whether this, or that, or both may prosper. Leave not

not off, because thou prevailest not at once or twice ; *He that endureth to the end, shall be saved.* Importunity prevails at length, no Oratory like to it.

2. It may be concluded hence, that we may not rest on the means. A Man may put his Hand, but not his Heart on them. God commands the one, but forbids the other. *Noah's Dove* might make use of her Wings to fly, but trusted only to the Ark ; a Man useth his Feet to go over a Bridg, but trusteth to the Bridg for safety. Christians may and must walk and fly with the Wings of Obedience, but in the mean time they must trust to the Ark, to the Bridg, *Christ*, to carry and lead them over the devouring Sea of Destruction ; otherwise they rob God of his Honour [like *Michal*, who put an Image in *David's* room, they put the Means in the room of God] and themselves of the Help and Comfort. To advance the Means above their place, is a most compendious way to render them useless, to make the River a barren Wilderneck ; as to lay too much weight upon the Pillars raised by any Man's hands, is the way to pull the whole Frame upon their Heads: That Stomach will remain unsatisfied, that feeds on the Dish instead of the Meat. Nothing can avail without God's blessing. After all, to him we must fly, and on him we must wait, till he be pleased to bestow what he offers ; and of this

we may be assured in his time, because as it follows in the fourth and last Observation hence: *Viz.*

Doct. 4. *That the Lord is earnest in his Offer of Grace to all under the Means; so that if any perish, it is through their own default.*

Behold, I will allure, and I will speak. He meaneth what he saith indefinitely, and will do what he meaneth, unless Men turn the deaf ear, and through stubborn resistance exclude themselves. As it fares with some Persons, who are wilfully set to destroy themselves, notwithstanding they have many excellent Remedies and Means to the contrary.

This Point will appear two ways.

1. From the truth of the Means designed by the Lord for such an end. The Means are for the End, and the End is as truly and more really intended than the Means, if I may so speak. Now it is certain and presupposed, that the Lord is earnest in the Means, therefore much more in the end. A Man may love the End for it self, but the Means are ever chosen and loved for the End. I cannot see how it can stand with the Wisdom and Goodness of God, to be earnest in the Means, and not to intend the End; or to offer that to any, which he hath no purpose to give. *The Lord*

Lord never said to the Seed of Jacob, Seek ye my Face in vain. But whoso doth seek him in the use of means, shall find him.

2. It appears from the qualification of the Means.

1. It is proportioned to the Nature of a reasonable Creature. The Lord works not upon Men, as on Blocks or Brutes, or on the Stars, who being irrational, and incapable of acting by any Rule, are therefore acted, and run their Course by the mighty Word of God's Power, they live of the Spirit's Omnipotency, and immediate Acts. But on Men he worketh as upon Creatures endued with understanding and Will; he *enlightneth, allureth, speaketh unto the Heart*, and persuadeth by such Arguments and Motives, as cannot be gain-said. A Sign that the Lord doth really intend what he doth pretend.

2. It is followed close with Precepts, enjoining them Constancy in the use of such means, *pressing Line upon Line*, day after day, *here a little, and there a little*; and divers Promises of acceptance and success. See those pathetical and affectionate Expressions, which hold forth not only his Will, but the strength and height of it in this matter. *Ezek. 33. 11. As I live, saith the Lord; then the Ingemination of it, Turn ye, turn ye, with a vehement exhortation, Why will ye die?* And in divers other places. Which does assure us, that the Lord doth really purpose what he

speaks, and is more ready to give, than Man is to accept. *We are Ambassadors for Christ, as if God did beseech you by us; we pray in Christ's stead to be reconciled to God.* And who can think or say, he doth not desire our Reconciliation? It is highly injurious to conclude, *Deum non sincerè velle, quod se velle dicit, sub conditione*: That God doth not truly and really will what he saith and willeth, under the conditions of Faith and Repentance. What Comfort or encouragement is there for a poor Sinner to come home to God, if this fail? In and from whom these three Grounds are required.

1. That he be persuaded of God's love unto him, that he willeth indeed his Health and Safety in particular.

2. That the Terms on which he willeth it, are the Conditions of the new Covenant, Faith and Repentance.

3. That an unfeigned submission to God's own Ordinances, is the right and ready way to enable the Soul to perform these Conditions, and so to attain the End. Whoso would be saved, must be well grounded and thoroughly persuaded of this.

And so much for the first thing mentioned in the beginning. The second and third follow, which contain the main Business intended, and are the Marrow of the Text. *Viz.*

II.

The Preparation of the Soul for Grace.
I will allure her into the Wilderness.

And herein are two things remarkable.

1. The legal work of the Spirit, in breaking the Heart of Stone, and drawing it under sound Humiliation. *Lac̄tabo eam*, I will entice her; so *Rivet*. *Inclinabo eam*, I will incline or bend her to my Mind, saith *Zaneby*. *Reddam eam flexibilem mihi*, I will bring her pliant to my hand; so *Calvin*. *Ego seducens eam, ire faciam desertum*; so *Arius Montanus*; Seeing others have done so to her hurt, I will seduce her for good. *I will allure, and bring her into a Wilderness*, [of saving Trouble, and wholefom fear,]: So our last Translation rendreth it. The very Name of *Noah's* eldest Son by birth, to whom this Promise was first revealed, doth explain this Phrase, and illustrate this Work. *Gen. 9. 27.* *God shall enlarge Japhet, &c.* יָפֶֿתֿ of פֶּֿתֶֿחַ *seductus, p̄llectus, persuasus*. Which may be, and is often taken in the worser part; yet the Context here, and in *Genesis*, enforceth us to take it in the best sence only. I will seduce, allure, persuade her for good. As the Devil, and his Instruments, had seduced her to hurt, so the Lord in tender mercy and pity would seduce

seduce another way for her good. Even as Lovers use to improve all their Art and Skill to persuade and obtain the good Will of those whom they love and affect to marry: So the Lord being in love with his People, and desiring to marry them to himself, in and by his Son for ever, speaks thus in the Lovers Dialect, *I will allure her*, and cause her to do what she would not, that afterwards she may do what she should. Others, I find, who judge it more sound to derive *Japheth* from אַפֶּת, which signifies *dilatare*, to enlarge, to open the Heart, and affect it with Joy. Which doubtless may be admitted as a Consequent of the former, both serving to set forth this preparative Work, as a necessary disposition preceding Conversion. For as Faith is the Condition of the Covenant, so is this Preparation the Condition of Faith. No Faith ordinarily without it in Truth, although many have Faith without it in regard of Sense. The thing may be done truly, and yet not observed distinctly.

2. A second thing to be noted here, is the State and Condition of all such as are under this preparative Work of the Law. They are said to be *in the Wilderness*, *הַמִּדְבָּר* *quasi locus à sermone remotus*; a remote Place, far from Company, from Conference, and from human Comforts, where she should meet with none to quench the Motions of the Spirit, none to dawb with untempered Mortar, no Egyptian

Reed to rest upon, none to complain unto, or to seek Comfort from, but the Lord alone. Into such a place or condition the Lord would bring her, as that none should hinder his Work any longer. So that by מִדְבָּר, or *Wilderness*, here is not to be understood a Cell or a Monastery, as *Aquinas* glanceth, [2. 2^{dæ} q. 188. art. 8.] nor a desert Place, properly called a *Wilderness*, but rather the State and Condition of the Parties to be converted; ὡς ἔρημος, as a *Wilderness*, so *Hierom*; εἰς ἔρημον, into the *Wilderness*, so a latter Edition of the Septuagint, more agreeable to the Original; importing three things, viz.

1. A turning of those to be converted out of all the deceitful Holds of Nature, wherein Men usually shelter themselves against the Power of the Word of God. The ready way (we know) to take the Hare, is by driving her from her Coverts and Burroughs, wherein she doth use to hide her self from the Dogs that pursue her: so here.

2. A presentation to the eye of the Understanding, of many spiritual Dangers, as so many roaring Cannons on every side, where-with a Christless Person is environed; so that he, who thought all to be well with him before, while he remained securely asleep in the state of Nature, now seeth all to be quite naught, and out of order. He dreamed he was rich, happy, and wanted nothing; but being awake, he seeth himself poor, miserable, and

and naked. Alas for wo! Within him he hears Conscience telling him the truth; *above* him he beholds God offended, frowning, and turning his loving Countenance from him; *beneath* him he seeth and feeleth Hell opening her Mouth to receive him, having deserved, as he now judgeth, the lowest Room, the darkest Corner, and the fiercest Flames there; *about* him trouble and fear is on every side. He is weary of Life, because of Sin; and yet afraid to die, because of the account; alone he is tempted and terrified, and in company he is defiled or grieved. What to do, or whither to go, he knoweth not. This is a *Wilderness* indeed. As it is with a wounded Hart, who feeling the Shaft, runs from the Woods to the Plain, and from thence to the Woods again, but finds no ease at all, *Heret laeri lethalis arundo*, the deadly Shaft sticks fast in his side. Or as it was with the ancient *Hebrews*, when they were led by *Moses* and *Aaron* from *Egyptian* Bondage, into the pleasing Liberty of fruitful *Canaan*, but through a vast Wilderness, full of Troubles, Conflicts, Trials: So it is with the *Woman*, the *Church*, and every Member thereof, out of Christ, but coming on towards him, they begin to see their Sins, they hear the terrible Threats of the Law, they fear the Wrath of God, as a just Judge; they run up and down, here for advice, and there for comfort, like Men afrighted to distraction; (for so the blind World

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judgeth

judgeth them) and cannot be comforted, till the Lord speak unto their Hearts.

3. It imports variety of Afflictions, following upon the former Efficacy, and Discovery of the Law. And these are both positive and privative, sometimes one, and sometimes both, as need requires.

Privatively, the Lord deals with Men, when he deprives them of Sacrifices, Sacraments, of Wealth, Honour, Food, House, Friends, or Liberty, and the like ; to pursue and follow them with Infamy, Poverty, Imprisonment, or Captivity ; and all to humble, and make them pliant to his Hand for their good. [He made *Jeshurun* look with lean Cheeks, that he might leave kicking, and learn Righteousness.] *I will take away the beauty of thy tinkling Ornaments, and instead of a sweet smell, there shall be a stink ; instead of a Girdle, a Rent ; and Baldness instead of well-set Hair, &c.* *Cruce salutare remedium est ad tollendam cordis duritiem, non naturæ suæ, &c.* i. e. The Cross is a wholesome Medicine to humble and soften the hard Heart, not in it self, (as the Pool of *Bethsaida* did not at any time give healing, but when the Angel descended into it) but by a Spiritual Power, using that Instrument to bow us,

Now stand, and lay all these together, then you may say, *This is the Wilderness*, or, *this is a Soul prepared for Christ*. The whole
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may be comprised in one *Thesis* or Theological Conclusion, *Viz.*

Doct. That it is Christ alone, who in the use of means, brings his chosen Ones into such Trouble for their good.

In which Proposition are to be observed, the Author, Subject, Means, and End.

First ; The Author, 'אני Ego, I, even I, the first and the last, with whom the new Covenant was established, having power to offer Grace in Promises; I that have satisfied Justice, and overcome all the Enemies of Mankind; I, that do prevail, and am accepted in a real tender of my own Merits to the Father in behalf of my Church: It is I, *even Jesus Christ*, that will do it. He it was that spoke to the Patriarchs, and by the Prophets; he it was, that made known the secret Will, and good pleasure of God to Man; he it is, who made the Body, and prepares the Soul, to erect a Spiritual Frame and Government in the Heart; supporting the *bruised Reed*, and blowing the *smoking Flax*, till he turn the one into a brazen Pillar, and the other into a triumphant Flame. 'אני I, considerable, either as God simply, or Man really and truly, or as *Mediator*, God and Man jointly.

As God, so he is a principle Efficient in this Work. His Names, whereby he is described

in both Testaments, do say so much, *יהוה אלשדי אדני* All which do signify Being independent, Authority, Strength, and All-sufficiency, for his undertaken Charge. *Ὁ ὤν, ὁ Θεός*; two Greek Names, much magnified by *Damascen* and *Aquinas*; the one being a Name of Nature, and signifieth absolute and perfect Being, even the chiefest Good; the other being a Name of Authority and Power, imports the extent of Divine Providence, compassing, disposing, and working all in all. See for this purpose, especially two places of Scripture, *Exod. 34. 6. And the Lord passed before him, and proclaimed, יהוה אלרחום* The Lord, the Lord merciful. *Rev. 1. 8. Εγω εἰμι τὸ Α καὶ τὸ Ω, &c. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, &c.*

As Man, so he is the principal Instrument, by and through his Humanity to convey Life into all his Members, once called effectually, and united, *Joh. 1. 14, 16. The Word was made Flesh, and dwelt among us, &c. Full of Grace and Truth. And, Of his Fulness we receive Grace for Grace. Joh. 5. 21, 26. As the Father raiseth up the Dead, and quickneth them; even so the Son quickneth whom he will, &c.*

As God-Man, the Mediator, so he is the Meritorious Cause, procuring and preserving Life for and in all his. How, and why this should be appropriated to the Son, when as there is but one Nature, and so one Principle of

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of Action, common to all the Persons in that
sacred and ever blessed Trinity, is somewhat
difficult to believe, but more hard to conceive
and express: possibly the following Reasons
may give some light unto it. Thus it is,

1. Because such was the Will of God, ac-
cording to his infinite Wisdom so to order it,
that the second Person only should undertake
the Office of Mediation, fulfil the Law, sa-
tisfy Justice, and dispense Grace;

2. Because it is a mixt Work, neither simply
Opus ad extra, wholly outward, for so it is
common, the Father and the Holy Ghost do
cooperate with the Son in this Dispensation;
nor altogether *Opus ad intra*, an inward Work,
for then there were no doubt nor scruple, but
it might be personal, limited to any of the
three, as it was in the Incarnation, all the three
Persons were Joint-workers in a preparative
Inchoation, yet in the end and complement
of it, we see it was terminated in and upon
the Person of the Son. The Divine Nature
was incarnate, as relatively contracted (with
due reverence and submission be it spoken)
to a certain manner of subsistence in the Per-
son of the Son. *Quomodo tota Filius sola sit*
incarnata, non tamen Pater, cum sint una Sola,
credo, licet ad exprimendum non intelligo, Zanch.
So it is in the Dispensation of Grace, the thing
is willed, and the Subject prepared by a Joint
Work of all the Persons in Trinity, but the
execution of that purpose, and the actual

fruition of Grace, is in and by the Son; first elected to that Hypostatical Union between the two Natures, to the Office of Mediation, then given as Head unto the Church, whence Life and Motion is derived to his Mystical Body, elect in and after him.

2^{dly}. Here is the *Subject* to be observed, whereon this Work passeth, *Her*. No one particular Person is here meant, but a select Company to be gathered from divers Families, Countries, Kingdoms, [tho here more restrictly, as limited to the People of the Jews,] and so to be knit into one Body. The Church *meligant*, the Whore of Babylon, Rev. 17. 1, 3. called *Antichrist*, is called and compared to a Woman, [a Whorish Woman, for seeming Beauty, Bravery, Surlity, and Impudency,] not any one, but a Company, that exceed in Wickedness, and increase in it. So the Church *Militant*, the Spouse of Christ, is likened to a Woman, for flexibility and fertility, not any one single Person, but a chosen Company, gathered together in one; [*Una Ecclesia, quia ex una Fide, per unum Spiritum nascitur. Epiphani.*] some of all sorts, Men, Women, Jews, Gentiles, Greeks, Barbarians; not all of any sort; Choice admits not of Universality. The singular Number here and elsewhere used, imports a Paucity, or at least a Singularity of Persons. *Quare hunc trahit & non illum, noli judicare, si non vis errare.* S. Aug. in Joh. *Causa*

Causa occulta esse potest, injusta esse non potest.
 Ibid. Epist. 59. ad Paulin. Choice was made
 of Her, not for the Multitude, much less for
 any Merit. See her Condition, Ezek. 16.
 and her Behaviour before, in the former part
 of the Chapter. The Promise was of his own
 free Grace and good Will, without any merit
 of preceding Will or Work in her. Works of
 Nature might be foreseen, either as future or
 possible; but could not of congruity merit his
 Favour, being so evil. Works of Grace could
 not be foreseen, because they were not, nor
 could be indeed, till Grace were first bestow-
 ed. Good Works are an Effect, no moving
 Cause, much less meritorious for the procuring
 of Grace. About this freedom and particu-
 larity of Choice, in electing to the End, and
 predestinating to the Means, most of the Fa-
 thers downwards from *Augustine*, and among
 the founder sort of School Divines, *Lumbard*,
Aquinas, and many of the *Dominicans*, do strike
 in with the Divines of our Reformed Church.

3dly. Here is the Means, whereby [מפתח] *I will allure; or whereinto, המדבר the Wild-
 derness: Because I have known her, I will al-
 lure her into the Wilderness.* Whosoever is or-
 dained to the End, is also pre-ordained to the
 Means. The Lord can do it without Means,
 but commonly he doth it by such, as suit best
 with that Nature whereupon he is about to
 work. Mans will is naturally free from Co-
 action

action, therefore the Lord compelleth none but gently allureth all by degrees, of unwilling making them willing.

1. By illumination of the *Understanding*. Things unknown have no motive Faculty. As no Good wrapp'd up in Darkness, excites desire; so no Evil swathed up in Ignorance strikes trouble or sorrow.

2. By an effectual persuasion of the *Will* and then by an Infusion of renewing Grace. Faith is his Work and Gift, both for preparation of the Subject, the beginning of Grace and for the increase and consummation of the exercise thereof, *Phil. 1. 29. Heb. 12. 2.* God worketh all in Man, to will what he should do, and then to do what he willeth, according to his own good pleasure; but not as upon Stocks or Stones; these are moved without knowledg, as incapable of Consent, reasonable Creatures not so; they consent and approve, they know, they will, they love what God worketh in them. *I will make, [there is God's first work] that they shall walk in my Statutes, [there is Mans after Co-operation. Without me ye can do nothing: And, What hast thou, O Man, that thou hast not received?]* A place which St. Cyprian usually urged to exclude all boasting on Mans behalf; and whereby St. Augustine was brought to retract what he had wrote before, of Faith in us, and from us. Means must be used, but the Work is ascribed to an higher Power.

More distinctly know, that Means are of two sorts, either principal, or instrumental. The *principal* are either *more* principal, as Christ, in and by whom the Church hath all, and without whom nothing; or less principal, as the Benefits which flow from Christ, such are, *Adoption* by the communication of his Filiation, *Justification* by his Grace, and *Sanctification* by his Spirit. The *instrumental* Means are either *preparative*, in and by the Law; or *effective*, in and by the Gospel: of which more hereafter.

4^{thly}. Here is to be considered the *End* whereunto all this is directed; and that is twofold, either last, or next. The *last* End is the Glory of his rich Grace, in the glorification of his Spouse, the Church; the *next* End is the present Good of the Persons to be converted; being thus under preparation for Regeneration. As it is with a Goldsmith, that would make a Cup for use, or a Ring for Ornament; his Oar is hard, and full of dross, therefore he casteth it into the Fire, to soften and refine it; this done, he formeth and fashioneth it according to his Will. Gregory applieth this Similitude thus: We are the Gold, hard, and full of filth; this World is the Shop, Troubles are the Fire, God the Workman; let us learn how to suffer, he knoweth best how to prepare and fit us for his Service. As skilful Physicians hunt away the

the *Lethargy*, by casting the Body into some degrees of a Fever, to dry up that adventitious Moisture, which else would quench natural Heat, and bring in Death; so the Lord brings his Children into Spiritual Distress, to prevent Eternal Death, and everlasting Tor-
 ture in the burning Lake. Or, as it is with a tender Mother, who clothes her Breast with Gall or Wormwood, to wean the Child in its Affections, and gain it to eat stronger Meat; so and no otherwise is it with the Lord in this Work; he weaneth them from the Dugs of the World, and leadeth them into the *Wilderness*, that he might bring them into the possession of *Canaan*. Now no trouble for the present seemeth joyous, but grievous; nevertheless afterward it yeeldeth the peaceable Fruit of Righteousness to them that are exercised therein, enabling them to say, it was good for us that we were afflicted and broken, that we might rejoice in more strength. This the Lord only can do. *God shall persuade Jacob.* No finite power can work so upon the Spirit, much less upon a weak fearful Man, and yet sustain him under hope. The Spirit of a Man may help against Man, and against his own Infirmities; but when he cometh to grapple with the Almighty, when he is brought into the *Wilderness* to answer God charging him with his Debt, a terrified, burthened, and wounded Conscience, who else can support? *Prov. 18. 14.*

For the further opening of the Point, and consequently of this *preparative* Work to the capacity of the meaner sort, three things shall be here insisted on, *viz.* That it *hath* been so, *how* it is effected, and *wherefore*. In which we shall find what *Sampson* did in the Lions Belly, many Honey combs of Spiritual Honey.

1. This hath been, and is the Method observed ordinarily in the Dispensation of Grace, though a diversity may be granted as to the measure of it. Look as in Music, all the Strings of the Instrument are touched with the same hand, yet not with a like stroke; so here. And the Lord is the Agent: for Man being once turned from Life, and dead in Sin, cannot bring himself into any of this wholsom Pain, much less out of it; no, no, it is the Lord that in great Love doth both these for him. Our first Parents had a legal Sermon made to them, before they had any Promise applied, *Gen. 3. 16.* *Hagar* was brought into a *Wilderness*, [real to her, typical to others,] before she was truly wrought upon in Faith to say, *I have seen him that seeth me.* *Gen. 16. 13.* God begins the Work. and seeth his, before they see or seek him. *Manasses* was sent into Captivity, he was put in Prison, and fettered in Irons (the best Ornaments he ever wore) before his Mountain could be brought low. In such a proud Heart the Devil keeps his hold a long time; such rusty Locks will not easily open.

open. Now he is as weary of his Sins, as he is of his Chains. As a *Physician* deals with Persons distracted, and out of their wits; he commands that they be kept in the dark, to be bound in fetters, to have miserable and hard Fare, that by all they may be brought to their Understanding: Thus God dealeth with some Sinners, that are turned mad, and grown out of their right Reason by their Wickedness, that he may recover them, he binds them in Chains, brings them low, that at length they may consider of their Condition, and be healed. *Paul* had both a Voice and Light to guide him into this *Wilderness*, before the Lord would *speake unto his Heart*, and tell him what he should do. And those of whom mention is made, *Acts* 2. 37. 16. 30. with many other such of our own observation, were brought into great distress, through fear and desire; fear of Sin, desire of God's Love and Favour, not able to resist any where; *Men and Brethren, what shall we do?* Comforts they refuse, Threatnings they apply with hand and heart, witty and ready they are to hurt themselves; as if their vital and animal Spirits were stopp'd in their Passage by some Disease, they are often near sinking; such affinity and agreement there is between the Mind and the Body. Observe such troubled Spirits, you may, to look heavily, sigh deeply, as if the Heart would break, and at last to cry out, *Wo and alas!* if this and that be so, as I fear it is,

and do believe, how can I be saved? If the spots of a Leopard can be wiped out, if the hue of an *Indian* can be changed, if a *Camel* can go through the eye of a Needle; then may I be cleansed, renewed, and saved. But Lord, how can that be? is there any Balm, any Blood, any Mercy, for such an one as I? Tell me, O my Friends, speak thou Man of God, was there ever such an one read or heard of? a presumptuous Sinner, a beastly Wretch, a close Lover of Wickedness, an Hater of Holiness? To look upon, I am afraid of myself; what shall I do? whither shall I fly? say, do not you loath me, and blush to behold and hear me? was there ever such an one as I accepted?

This is that narrow Way, that leads many to Life; that great Strait, whereinto the right dearly beloved of the Lord are often brought, to learn, how that is possible to God, which is impossible with Men. As the Woman by God's appointment is to bring forth in pangs and travail; so must the Heart of Man ordinarily labour, till *Christ be formed* in it.

2. How and after what manner doth the Lord effect this?

It is either by removing Impediments, or by presenting to the Eye of the Conscience,

(1.) The many deceitful Grounds there are, whereon Men naturally rest, and boast of,

as if their Estate at worst were well enough. And till these deceitful Props be removed, they will not in earnest seek after Christ, much less accept him, to rest upon him. These the Lord removes, by shewing unto Men their weakness and insufficiency to yeeld them any comfort. And they are either inward, or outward: *Inward*, as Knowledg without Love, Invention without Judgment, and a Memory without any practical delight in the Notions retained, [all which a Man may have, and yet be no better than a Devil,] the sufficiency of Baptismal Regeneration, without any care or thought to perform Conditions. These being without the power of Godliness, are only as a dead Corps strewed and adorned with Flowers, as a gouty Foot covered with a Crimson Shoo, or a Statue of Earth and Dirt, with some glorious colouring, and old Sepulchers, with new painting over them. The Lord convinceth them, that this *Ark* is not sure enough to keep them in the deluge of many Waters, yea, that all things without Grace will prove an Aggravation of their Condemnation. As in some Countries, when their Malefactor were to be burn'd in the Fire, they poured Oil and Pitch to encrease their Torments; so will every Privilege make Hell the hotter for such as these. In the day when the *fiery Trial* shall be, all their painting will melt away. *Outward*, as Riches, Honour, Health, Learning, meer Civility, and

ough and Fortnality, all commendable in their kind, but not sufficient. These Men they have, and yet come short of Grace and Life in Glory. Few rich Men shall be saved, 1 Cor. 1. 26. Corpulent Birds seldom fly high. These many things cumber them: And, *If your Righteousness exceed not the Righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, you cannot enter into the Kingdom of God.* The best of these are but Weeds in God's Garden, Tares in his Wheat, Chaff in his Floor. Therefore the Lord doth wisely and timely remove these Impediments.

(2.) He presenteth Sin, and the Consequents thereof, in their true Colours, pulleth off the Skin of that Viper, washes off the paint, and shews its Face in full deformity. And this he doth ordinarily four ways, viz.

[1.] By corporal Calamities, and temporal Rods, occasionally opening that Eye which Prosperity and Security had fast closed. As in Joseph's Brethren, and the Prodigal Son, we have an Instance. The former (Gen. 42. 21.) declare the force of Conscience, and fruit of Affliction. Old Sins are brought to a new reckoning. *We are very guilty concerning our Brother, in that we saw the Anguish of his Soul, when he besought us, and we would not hear, therefore is this Evil come upon us.* The latter came to himself, when he was under want; his Affliction, like Eye-bright Water, had

had a strange and great Influence on his be-
 dulle Sight ; now he resolves to go to his Fa-
 ther. Yea, many now living can say, I doubt
 not, *It is good* for them that they have been
afflicted. They had been undone, had they
 not been undone ; that they might go weep-
 ing towards Heaven, while others go laugh-
 ing towards Hell. Poverty may be so ordered,
 as to prove a Preparative to Spiritual Riches :
Imprisonment antecedent to Evangelical Liber-
 ty. Sicknes and weakness of Body often
 tendeth to the strength and health of the
 Inner Man. This brings to mind that Story
 in *Bromiardus* concerning an Apprentice that
 had served an hard Master, by whom he had
 beenfore beaten. These Blows the Lord had
 made a means of the Man's Conversion.
 Whereupon lying on his Death-bed, and his
 Master standing by, he caught hold fast on his
 hands, and kissed them, saying, *He manus*
perduxerunt me ad Paradisum, These hands
 have helped to bring me to Paradise.

And *Beza* tells us of himself, that God was
 pleased to lay the Foundation of his Spiritual
 Health, in a violent Sicknes which befell him
 at *Paris*. *Morbus iste vere Sanitatis principi-*
um, Ep. præfix. Confess. What is it, that
 God cannot make the Channel to bring in the
 Ship, the Cistern-pipes to convey the Water,
 whose Spring is in Heaven ? *Ezekiel's Wheels*
 shall move, if the Spirit drive them, and the
Pool of Bethesda communicate Health ; if the

Angel

Angel descend, and stir the Waters. Blessed is the Man whom thou correctest and teachest.

[2.] By Spiritual Combats, raised by the Spirit of Bondage, between Fear and Desire, Hope and Distrust; continued and encreased by the unregenerate *Will* going one way, and the Light of natural Conscience going another way; so that their very Constitution is in discord; there is no more agreement than between Fire and Water; by reason of which the Soul is brought into great Anguish, much Fear, because of Sin, and the great Danger it apprehends as the Consequents of both; these Conflicts being like the Opposition of Planets in the Superiour Orb, fore-runners of great Evils.

[3.] Usually it is by the Ministry of the Law, [that School-master, whose Lash makes Sinners Backs to smart,] whereby the Lord awakeneth Conscience indeed, and striketh terror into the Hearts of his Chosen, casting them down very low to Self-denial; he breaks their stony Hearts in pieces, convincing Men as Transgressors, telling them that they are the Men, even Men of Death; this they have done, and that they deserve, discovering millions of Sins more than they ever dreamed of, quickning Sin in the Conscience, and putting a Weapon into its hand to kill the Sinner under his Guilt. For this is properly the Office of the Law to detect and convince Men of such and such Sins, to pass sentence

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against

against them for those Sins, and to follow them so convicted, with a thundring noise from place to place, hedging and hemming them in on every side, that they can neither get out, nor be quiet any where, till they humble themselves and fall down before the Lord's Mercy-Seat.

Fourthly, We may not exclude from this Preparative Work, a branch of the Gospel, which the Lord makes use of, for the completing this Preparation; by it, as by beams and heat from a Fire far off, to soften and melt those broken pieces, that so the Heart being ready to fall asunder, and grieving more kindly than it can do under mere Legal Terrors, may readily and delightfully admit of Spiritual Infusions, and be the more speedily brought into a new Mould. And this the Gospel doth,

First, By unvailing unto such distressed Minds, the holy and pure Nature of God himself [which the Law discovereth only as he is a Creature, the Gospel further, as he is a Father] his patience and loving kindness in Christ, his rich Mercy, great Love, Free-Grace, those Spiritual Beams by which the Divine Nature shines forth upon us. *Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?* One, that is so holy and harmless; one that hath done so much for thee; one that doth so entirely love thee, and desire thy good; Hast thou none to sin against but thy *Saviour*? None to abuse
but

but thy *Friend*? None to kick against but the *Bowels* of Love? Did not I suffer enough upon the *Cross*? Must I needs suffer more? This struck the Nail on the Head, this made his Eyes to water, his Heart to melt; with this kind salutation, *Saul's* hard Heart was softened and made pliable to a further work.

Secondly, By discovering the sinfulness of Sin; that it is not only *fearful*, as the Law saith, but *filthy* also; not only *evil*, but the *greatest* evil; whence once disrobed of that pleasing and deceitful shining Skin, patcht up of the shreds of Pleasure, Profit, and Carnal Content, it is apprehended as opposit to the greatest Good, and consequently more to be hated and avoided than Hell: There is no Hell without Sin, nor any Heaven with Sin: Hell is *Penal*, but Sin is a *Criminal* evil: The evil of *pain* is contrary to the good of a *finite* being only, while the evil of *fault* is opposite to an *infinite* purity. Both these, namely, the Law and the Gospel, being thus amplified, prest and applied to the sinners Soul, so that he can find no starting hole to evade, no corner to run into, no gap open to get out of this *Wilderness*; by this time, it comes to pass, that he finds a combustion in his Brest, a fire kindled in his Bones, such new trouble as he never felt: now Hope appears, anon Despair; at one time Fear, another time Love cometh into the Soul, like flashes of Lightning, both followed with Tears

and Complaints; he may be often heard to sigh, and sometime to beat the Brest, and say, O Lord, that I could repent! O that I could believe! O that I had a soft tender Heart! *That my Head were Waters, and mine Eyes a fountain of Tears, that I might weep Day and Night:* Help me, O my Friends, for the *terrours of the Almighty oppress me, he makes me inherit the sins of my youth,* so that I am ready to sink; Help me, O my God, to do what thou commandest, command what thou wilt, and thou shalt not command in vain. Make me a Man after thy own Heart; give me, O give, if not a Fountain, yet a Stream; if not a Stream, yet some few drops of penitent Tears, to ease a burnd Heart, and to prepare a loathsome Soul for the more precious streams of Christ's Blood.

And yet, as if all this were not enough, behold and see, there steppeth up another Witness more, against this terrified Creature: And that is, a reflecting power of the Soul, called *Conscience*, which joyneth with the Law and Gospel in their Sentence, and meeting him alone, as flying from both the former, and hoping somewhere to escape, assaults the poor Soul, and concludes to this effect: Nay, whither now? Think not to shift off all, hope not to carry all away, as *Sampson* did the Gates; go not about to hide it, do not deny or extenuate it; for all this is true which thou hast heard, from the Law, and

and Gospel. O wretched Creature! thus and thus hath God walked towards thee, in Justice, in Mercy, in Power, in Patience and Bounty, he sent Christ with healing in his Wings, to heal and do thee good; and yet thus and thus rebelliously and ungratefully hast thou walked towards him; thou hast put away Salvation, bolted out thy Physician: What wilt thou say? Whither wilt thou go? Nay, nay, think not of pleading, dream not of flying, much less of any hiding, except thou wilt contract farther guilt, and a greater burden on thy self, which is heavy enough already: Down proud Heart, down with it lower than thy Knees, cloath thy self in Sack-cloth and Ashes, put a Rope about thy Neck, as *Benhadads* Servants did, confess thy faults humbly, aggravate thy folly ingenuously, and then thou mayst hope to hear the voice of Mercy; there is no way to flie from him, but by falling down before him; Blood-letting is a cure of Bleeding, To close and get in, is the only way to avoid the blow.

Thirdly, *Why the Lord thus brings his Children into the Wilderness?*

Ans. All God's Actions are ordered by infinite Wisdom, therefore some reason may always be rendred of his Will: In case we apprehend it not, we must acknowledg the weakness of our own Capacities and subscribe it, without enquiring after any Reason,

son, because we know it is his Will: Yet in this business, something may be said as probable, and with due reverence.

He doth it, *First*, To divorce the Heart from Sin, and to break that Love-knot between the Heart and Sin in every Natural Man; which ordinarily is not done without some throws of this Spiritual Trouble. While Men run up and down in the seeming pleasant fields of Liberty, sin is sweet and fair unto them, so far from fear that they are in love with it. Who ever saw a covetous *Usurer* troubled in mind when he is telling his Money, and reckoning up his Bonds and Bills? An *Adulterer* mourning with his Mistress in his Arms? *Belshazzar* indeed was taken and troubled among his Cups, and so are some Drunkards; but that was an extraordinary judgment. While Men are Drunk with Pleasures, and befotted with delightful Objects, commonly they are not sensible of any danger, but being once brought into the *Wilderness* of fear and solitary Silence, they have leasure to consider, and ability to discern, that Sin is treacherous as a *Jesuit*, bitter as Gall, Ugly, more ugly than the Devil: And then they loath and fly it, then they cry out, *Lord, what wouldst thou have us to do?* When before, they would not be ruled, nor persuaded by any reason. The *Jews* will not part with their Idols, till they bring them into Captivity; nor *Sampson* with *Dalilah*, till she

the betray him into the hands of the *Philistines*; then away Idols, and let *Dalilab* be burned alone; *Sampson* repenteth. The Viper bearen, casteth up her Poyson. The Traytor on the Rack, will confess and forsake all. *The burnt Child dreads the fire*; and the Wormwood upon the Brest, weans the Child from it.

Secondly, It is to humble the Soul, and cause her to set a right Estimate upon Christ, hitherto undervalued. Christ would not be so sweet, if Sin were not so bitter. The Man upon whom the Law hath not passed Sentence, will not say *Gratias* for a Pardon. Besides, it is necessity that endears any thing to us. Extremity of pain, makes us to prize a little ease; and extremity of want, to admire a little plenty. *Darius* being vanquished by *Alexander*, and in flight being in extremity of Thirst, drank Water out of a Puddle, mingled with much Blood of slain Souldiers, and said, It was the Sweetest Drink that ever he tasted in his Life. The *Prodigal* that disregarded all the Dainties of his *Father's House*, did highly value the Servants Bread there, when he was reduced to feed upon *Husks* in the *Wilderness*. As it is with a weary Swimmer floating in the restless Sea, ready to sink every moment, how welcome is a bough to him, when as if he had been upon the shoar, he would not have regarded it. So it is with such a wearied Man brought
into

into the *Wilderness* of great distress and danger, he is so humble and gentle, that a *Child* may lead him: He cried out, and looked about him, but few hear, none can help him. O how welcome then is the Thought, the Sight, the Presence of Christ, that *Tree of Life*! He will part with all, Sins, Goods, Liberty, Life, or any thing, if he may but touch the hem of his Garment. Only then, and to all such he is a *Jesus* indeed.

Thirdly, It is, that they may be the better ever after. More zealous and serviceable to God, who hath some great Work (commonly) for such to do, and therefore their preparation is answerable. A high Building must have a low Foundation. *Luther* observed of himself, that when God was about to set him upon any special Service, he either laid some fit of Sickness upon him beforehand, or turned Satan loose upon him. For he was much exercised and beaten from his tender years with Spiritual Conflicts; as *Melancthon* testifieth in his Life. And this was in all likelihood to fit him for the great Work, the Lord had cut out unto him. There is no whole Heart to the broken: None so sound to hold Grace, as that; and the more it is broken, the more it contains. A Paradox in Nature, but not in Grace. *Besides*, they are hereby made more compassionate, and helpful unto others. Hence it was that God gave *Luther* such a Grace, that in his Sermons,

all that heard him, thought every one, his own Temptations had been toucht and noted by him; and when signification thereof was made to him by his Friends, and being demanded how it could be? answered, Mine own Temptation and Experience are the cause thereof. As a Physician that trieth the virtue of some sovereign composition upon his own Body, he is the better able to Cure another with that Receipt. It is a great invitation to Mercy, to see one in the same condition that we our selves have been in: As he said, *Haud ignara mali, miseris succurrere disco.* As a Woman that hath had a Child can more pity such as are in Travel, because she hath suffered the like pain. When Christians by their own experience know the Way, like old Travellers, they can lead others, and bring them into, and guide them through this Spiritual Trouble, saying; Thus and thus were I brought in, and so came I off; this course I took, and this success I found, &c. Experienced Learners, are the best Teachers.

These are some of many Reasons which might be given, of the Lord's proceeding in this manner towards his People. The Sum of all is, *for their good.* He casteth them down very low, that he might lift them up the higher, he leads them through a *Wilderness*, to convey them into *Canaan*: As hereafter will appear. So much by way

of

of Doctrine. The *Application* follows, which is a principal part of this Discourse. And

Use 1. It condemneth such first, as are frequently in the *Wilderness of Sin*, and wanton Prodigality, but never in the *Wilderness* of sorrow and saving Fear; much under Worldly, but never under Spiritual Trouble. How far are such from Grace, who have not past this Preparation? How far from Christ, from Comfort, from true Happiness? As far as the East is from the West, Darkness from Light, *Belial* from Christ, in point of Communion. Such have cause to fear, that Sin sits like a Queen in her Regency, that the *strong Man* keeps Possession, and that they are slaves to Satan, subjects of the Kingdom of Darkness. A Man may have some Trouble and yet not be Converted, but he cannot be Converted without some Trouble. The Heart cannot be broken for Sin, without the sight of Sin. The Sun looketh upon the Earth, thence draweth up Vapours, and distilleth them down again; so doth the Sun of the Understanding, which till it be Convicted, the Heart cannot be Compuncted. Sight of Sin must necessarily precede sorrow for Sin. An Infant in the Womb cries not, because it seeth not; but as soon as it comes into the Light, sets up its note. The blind Eye and the hard Heart go together, as unseparable Companions. Men will never loath themselves, till there be a remem-

remembering of their ways and doings that have not been good, *Ezek. 36. 31.*

Quest. It may be demanded, who are they, and how they are kept out?

Ans. Who they are that were never yet in this *Wilderness*, may easily be known by what hath been spoken already, in the description of this preparative Work; let any one bring himself, and compare his present estate with it, and the truth will readily be discovered; especially if he consider, and impartially answer to such like demands.

1. Whether he doth not retain in his Heart the love of some Sin, which either he knoweth, or might know to be a Sin: Though he do many things, yet hath he not an *Herodias* that he will not part with. Though, with the *Vintner*, he pull down the Bush, yet hath he not as much Heart to his Sin as ever? Though he pull down the Shop-window [reform outward Sins] yet doth he not follow his Trade within door? Doth he not sit brooding upon his Sin? It is hypocritical repentance, when Men leave some Sins only, and not others also: They can part with some kind of Corruptions, [it may be they are angry with them] but then there are others of which it may be said, as was of *Goliath's Sword*, none like to that. For as Repentance takes revenge upon every Sin, so more especially upon that the Sinner took most delight in: As *Cranmer*, who subscribed with his

his right Hand, what was against his Conscience, afterward with revenge put that first into the Flame; so doth the truly humbled Soul, take revenge on that Sin by which he hath most dishonoured God. In a word, such actions of the Soul which admit of private reservations and indulgences, and are not general, as to this matter, will be found a *Meteor* of the Brain, not an affection of the Heart.

2. Whether the injoyments of the World are not more precious in his esteem, than the Love and Favour of God? For this is certain, the Man that hath been under this Preparative Work, cannot but prefer the apprehensions of God's Love to all the World. Therefore *David* prayed that God would remember him with the Favour which he beareth to his People, *Psal.* 16. 4, 5. this he accounted his chiefest good. And *Luther* protested, he would not be put off with the things of this Life, Left-hand Blessings. To whom may be added that Noble *Italian* Marquess, who accounted not that Man worthy the name of a Christian, who preferred not one Day's communion with God, to all the splendour of the whole Earth. Now answer to this demand; How stand your affections to Christ, and other things below him? Are they to Christ as a Spark, to other things as a Flame? The Unregenerate Man's joy is diffused to Earthly things, but limited to
 Spiritual

Spiritual things. Say, are you not more chearful in Sinning, than in the performance of holy Duties? As it is with those Fishes that breed your Orient Pearls; those Pearls are the torment of the Fish, but when they are put upon a Man, they are an Ornament to him; so those Sins which are the Disease, the Burden, the Sorrow of a good Man, are they not a matter of delight to you?

3. Whether he doth not rest upon somewhat [Creature, or Action] more than upon Christ, or doth not prize something above him, or equal with him? As *Augustine* said, That *Marcellina* hung Christ's Picture, and the Picture of *Pythagoras* together; Dost not thou, O Man, set Christ and the World, or Christ and thy Duties together? A Man may magnifie Christ as willing to have him in the end, but part with nothing for him in the mean while; he may prize his Blood, but not his Grace; his Promises, but not his Precepts, Jesus, but not Christ. If thine own Conscience answer Affirmatively, it is an evident sign thou hast never been in this *Wilderness*.

Quest. But how are they kept out, seeing there is so much means to drive them into it? many Sons of Thunder, who heartily long after their Peoples safety, how are they hindred?

Ans. I conceive it is from these and the like Reasons:

First,

First, By the Multitude, who run so merrily in the broad-way of Carnal Pleasures, and draw multitudes after them. How ordinary is it for Men to follow a multitude to evil? Few consider that the way to Heaven is a narrow Way, and that they should be wise with a few. Few are of the mind of *Liberius*, an Orthodox Bishop of the Second Primitive Times, who when he was prest by the Emperour *Constantius*, to forsake the Truth, and vote for *Arrianism*, by this Argument, Art thou wiser than all the World? Very honestly replied, The Truth is no whit prejudiced by my aloneness in standing out; for of old there were but three that withstood the wicked Edict of the King of *Babel*. Most are of this Principle, *It is safe to do as the most do*. Like dead Fish, they swim down the Stream, whithersoever it runs; or like Water that takes the figure of the Vessel into which it is cast. They set their Dyal by the Town Clock, not by the Sun. The Voice of the People is with them the Voice of God: They infer that way to be truest, which is the largest.

Secondly, By delay, and putting off serious thoughts about Death and their Account, being afraid to hear of, much more to dive into their Estate, lest they should find that which would trouble them. *The Cup is in the Sack*. Thus the story goes of *Galba*, who having received a very great sum of Money from

from the state of *Rome*, and not being able to give account for it, took more care to avoid giving account than to do it. Thus Men keep their Consciences from considering their Conditions, because it is so bad with them, Like bad Debtors, who are loth to come to account, lest they should find their Estates low. Or as Hereticks, that are *Lucifuge Scripturarium*, such Owls that cannot abide the Day; they are afraid of discovering their Conditions, and so content themselves in generals, deceiving their own Souls.

Thirdly, By fair promises of future amendment; the thing they will do but in their own time, as if the Clock of Mercy would strike at their beck. Like those spoken of, *Hag.* 1. 2. *The time is not yet come.*

(1.) The time of rebuilding the Second Temple; it might be done hereafter: Such is the guise of graceless Men, to future and fool away their Salvation; hereafter may be time enough, and what need of such haste to build the Spiritual Temple: In space comes Grace, say they; God is more merciful than so, At what time soever a sinner repents, God will put away all his Wickedness; and thus they stand trifling with God and their own Souls, being always about to do that, which if not done, they are undone for ever. *Fools and blind Men!* As our Saviour calls the *Pharisees*, *Mat.* 23. 17. Hence it is, when they are prest to a speedy meeting of God by Repentance,

penitance, they answer as *Antipater*, King of *Macedon* did, when one presented him a Book treating of Happiness, & *χολαζω*, I am not at leisure: Or as *Archias* the *Theban*, when warn'd of a Conspiracy against him, cast the Letters by, saying, *In crastinum serias*, and was slain ere the Morrow came: So these Men will amend hereafter, when they have neither Time nor Grace to command: They promise a time of Healing, but a time of Terror and Torment may come. *Jer. 14. 19.* *Et jam ex Jesu factus est damnator, salutem consequi non possum;* as Father *John* said, when exhorted to believe in Christ Jesus, and to lay hold on his Merits. *Cham. Epist. Jesui.* pag. 124.

Fourthly, Others are kept off from a consideration of the troublesome of the Way, and lothness to leave their Sins. *Luther* said, while he was leaven'd with Popish Principles of Contritions and their Penance, there was not a more bitter word in all the Scripture than *Repent*; but when he understood the Gospel, nothing was more precious and welcom. Thus while the Duties of Religion are looked upon as clothed with Irksomeness, and burdensome Men are ready to reject them; saying, O the Way of the *Wilderness* is tedious! They will not crucifie the Flesh, cut off the *Right-hand*, and pull out the *Right-eye*; Men will do any thing to avoid it. The *Jews* would bring multitudes of
Sacr-

Sacrifices, kill many Bullocks and Rams, rather than any one Lust; they would Sacrifice their First-born, when they would not leave their sins. It is an Hell to Unregenerate Men, *Hafen Mullerus* reports of one *Franciscus Turrianus*, who wrote against the *Augustine's* Confession, but upon some Conviction, wished he had never read it, nor the Answer of *Anthony Sadeel*, against him; for it had made him somewhat doubtful what to hold, or which way to go, and concludeth thus: God's Word promiseth me comfort, if I forsake Rome. *Sed ego senex hinc exire non possum*: But I am old, and cannot depart hence. He could not submit to the Trouble, as for the Comforts of Heaven, to depart from Rome. So, many Men are wedded to their Sins, they can upon no terms part with them. They love not Trouble. *Christianus est perpetua Naturæ violentia*: Christianity is a perpetual violence against Nature; and therefore few are brought to it. These and many other shifts, Natural Men have to hide themselves from the Light and Stroke of the Word, so that they are not broken, benefited and brought by it into this *Wilderness*.

Use 2. Secondly, This Doctrine condemneth those, that think themselves to be in this *Wilderness*, before they are indeed, and so sitting down under that misconception, never come there: Mistaking every Sermon-sick-

passion, every sleight sight of Sin, every inward Trouble, every Tear, for sound Contrition and unfeigned Humiliation. Let such consider [there may be much glistering when is no true Gold].

First, How far many have gone, and yet come short. Some, like a Ship, have sunk in the mouth of the Harbour. *Esau* sought the Blessing carefully, and with Tears. *Abraham* humbled himself, even to the renting of his Clothes, and putting on of Sack-cloth. *Judas* confessed his sin, and made restitution, and both, doubtless, with abundance of trouble, and yet all came short. It's plain, there were great troubles and fears about Sin, as if some excellent and beautiful Child of Grace had been to be born; but after all the troubles, pangs and fears, there came forth a great nothing; they are as loathsome and abominable as before. You have heard of, and known many to cry out in the agony of their Souls, We have sinned grievously, what shall we do that we may be saved? And yet for all this Cry, this Travel, the Soul brings forth nothing but wind and emptiness.

Secondly, Others that have entred upon it, but have too quickly withdrawn themselves again; as *Cain* and *Herod* did: The former cried out, *My sins are greater than I can bear*, and therefore to ease himself, builds Cities, and useth all means to divert his fear and trouble: The latter, with *Felix* the Governour, puts

puts it off to a more convenient time, he will consider it another Season. So, many among us, when the Minister is plain and downright with them, the Word flasheth in their Faces like Lightning, then they see their Sins distinctly, and are indeed afraid of Hell; the Voice sounds still in their Ears, and their Sins like so many Furies follow them, till they betake themselves to some diverting employment or merry Company, to drive away such melancholy dumps, as many use to speak; like the wounded *Hart*, that labours to eat out the Arrow, they labour to put away Sin, that it may not alway be before them, and then all is lost, as if they had never been there at all: They quench the Fire that was kindled, and bolt out the Light that shined on them. Such Tears as these, are but like the Waters of standing Pools, that breed Toads and other Vermin.

Thirdly, A third sort may be deep and long in this legal Terroure; so that they harden under it, and after a sort grow proud of it; they can bewail their Sins, and cry out for inward fear and trouble (as if they were truly penitent) and yet live in them all the while; doing that with secret delight, which they pretend to fear and hate. O horrible deceit! so bleering the Eyes of Men, while they bathe Sin, but are unwilling to *drown* it; Resting upon this, That once they were

F 3

humbled

humbled, and therefore they need not now fear or care.

Fourthly, Another sort are such, who counterfeit Trouble, and complain of distress of Mind, when in truth there is no such matter. Like your common Beggars, who use to complain of such Grievs and Troubles which they never felt; so these, they complain and weep, only because they see and hear, that such Sorrow is usual among the Saints, and that such are most approved who pass this way, by the *Wilderness* of Legal Fear, into the *Canaan* of Evangelical Comforts; and therefore they would be thought to have, what they should have in truth. The Devil is God's Ape, and imitates him in all his Methods and ordinary ways of Grace; that if possible by his Delusions, he may gain some into his own Condemnation.

But to clear this a little further, there may be proposed two Questions of moment, *viz.*

First, How far a wicked Man may go under this Preparative Work, and yet come short of Grace?

Secondly, Wherein, and how far, those which are called, according to purpose, go beyond all others in this Trouble?

Answer. To the first, may be replied; That they are often brought into this *Wilderness*, at least for some Degrees, is certain; how far only

now only is questioned. Therefore to answer directly.

who First, They may be brought to *Illuminati-*
 di on of Mind: By the Glass of the Law they
 such may see what the Law requires, and how far
 who short they come in their Obedience, not
 ables without some trouble, and it may be great
 om- disquiet: And this not only confusedly, in
 and Generals, as *Pharaoh*; but distinctly for Par-
 the ticulars, as *Ahab* and *Judas* did. Of one it
 who is said, he repented and confessed, *I have sin-*
 ear- ned in betraying Innocent Blood, Mat. 27. 3.
 ts; And for the other, *Ahab's* Humiliation is so
 ve- great, 1 Kings 21. 27. that the Lord takes
 evil notice of it. See how *Ahab* humbleth himself!
 his And so the *Israelites*; How often were they
 if in their Humiliations for sin? But those Land-
 me floods were dried up again; in so much as
 ay Gregory compares them to the Grass-hoppers,
 which make sudden Leaps from the Earth,
 as if they would flie to Heaven, but present-
 ly fall down to the Earth again.

Secondly, They may be and are often
 brought to *Conviction* of the Will; that they
 may have nothing to say for themselves, a-
 gainst the Light of Divine Truth, in flatter-
 closing with the Light of Conscience. When
 that unprepared Guest, Mat. 22. 12. was
 questioned why he presumed to come without
 his Wedding Garment; it is said, *he was*
speechless; having no excuse to pretend, he
 was Self-condemned.

Thirdly, They may be brought to a conditional Application, so as to conclude a possibility of safety, that they might be freed from Sin, and Sentence of the Law, if they should believe and lay hold on Christ. So far is conceived that *Herod* went, by hearing of the *Baptist*. Yea, more, they may also have a fiducial Application and Appropriation of God unto themselves in particular; and herein may have a great resemblance of Justifying Faith. As *Paul* said, *Who loved me, and gave himself for me*. So these may apply Christ to their particular; I thank my Christ, my Redeemer, my Saviour, though in presumption notwithstanding.

Fourthly, They may go one step further; even to some apprehension of the Beauty of Grace, and that happiness following a Spiritual Union with Christ: Especially, if they live where the Law and Gospel are distinctly handled, skilfully intermixed, fully applied; so as not only to wish well, but to resolve and promise a better course: As appears from that known and famous Instance, *Mat. 13. 20.* where the third kind of hearers are said, *to receive the Word with joy*: As good News affecteth the hearers about the State and Kingdom, wherein they are much concern'd; so may Men be affected in hearing the glad tidings, the gracious Counsels of God to save Sinners discovered, and yet not regenerated. To which may be added, that difficult

place

place in the Epistle to the Hebrews, Chap. 6.
ver. 4, 5. Many Apostates have had great
meltings, and much sudden and strong joy.
But the Issue of all is, they ever dash on one
of these two Rocks: Either they *Presume*,
and so are careless to go on actually to re-
ceive and give themselves to Christ: Or else
they *Despair*, and so are hopeless of ever ha-
ving what they see and admire. In all these
fallings, the Truths of God pass by them,
as Water through a Conduit, and leave a
Dew, but soak not, as Water into the
Earth.

Quest. Secondly, It is demanded, *Where-
in those which are called according to purpose,
go beyond all others in this Wilderness of Trou-
ble?*

Ans. That it should be simply and in all
things a common work to those which are
outwardly called only, with those which are
inwardly called also, that good and bad are
brought alike into this *Wilderness*, that those
which attain Grace, and those which attain
none, should be brought to lie under one
degree of Legal Preparation, is strange to
assert; seeing it is the same Spirit under divers
names, that first prepareth by bringing into
the *Wilderness*, as the *Spirit of Bondage*; and
then infuseth Grace by speaking unto the
Heart, as the *Spirit of Adoption*: As also
considering, it is a promise made here in fa-
vour of the Church, and to her appropriated.
Yet

Yet it will be granted here, to be difficult to satisfy any, or to shew demonstratively wherein they differ. Only for the present take what may be offered that way, till some other by searching the Matter, shall give more and clearer Light for plainer discovery.

Those then, that are specially beloved of God, and whose safety the Lord doth absolutely aim at and intend, go beyond all others in this Work in these following particulars.

First, In the intent and purpose of God; which is not to Civilize, or only to Formalize them, as he deals with many; bringing them into trouble, to tame and keep them in order, for the good of humane Society; but indeed to go through with them, for their sound Humiliation, and through Sanctification.

Secondly, In the success and event; for some are only terrified and restrained for a time, when others are heartily grieved, even drencht in Sorrow, to be savingly renewed after: So that the *Spirit of Sanctification* doth immediately after manifest both Presence and Power, Victory and Sovereignty. But who doubteth of this? Is there no other way wherein they differ? Yes, and it may be thus, viz. 1. *Modo operationis*, in the manner of Working. Some are brought in by outward means only, (the Law, Sicknesse, the Crosses)

Crosses; as the Marble is said to sweat in
 foul Weather, but still remains Marble)
 assisted and followed with the common light
 and power of Natural Conscience; *others*
 are brought in, not without the Holy Ghost,
 ordering the outward means and their in-
 ward sight, to continue closed, till this Su-
 pernatural Work be perfected: As the Fa-
 ther by his Love in Electing before they had
 a Being, except in the Divine Understand-
 ing, so the blessed *Spirit* taketh hold upon
 them by his Power, so soon as they have any
 Being; which hold of his is diversly mani-
 fested, both in respect of time, means, and
 manner of Working: Towards some at one
 time, by one means, and after this manner;
 towards others at another time by some o-
 ther Ordinance, and after another manner:
 By degrees drawing them into this *Wilder-
 ness*, where he discovereth their natural
 Bondage, stirreth them to desire, and direct-
 eth them how to attain true Liberty, 2. *In
 duratione & disparitate dispositionis*: In their
 continuance and dissimilitude of Disposition,
 while they are there. Those that are or-
 dained to Life, do continue there common-
 ly longer: Not for intermitted Hours, to be
 now in and then out, but for Days, Weeks,
 Months, Years; never wholly off, till they
 pass *Jordan*, and arrive to their heavenly
Canaan. Some have been sensibly kept there,
 the most time of their Life, and yet come
 off

off well in the end. Besides, they are more kindled, and deeply affected with an hatred and loathing of all Sin; their affection is more lively and feelingly bent upon Purity, hungering and thirsting after Righteousness; and their hope is stronger, that it may be, that it will be better with them. For this is that secret Staff, which supporteth such Travellers. They desire pardon, and they hope they shall have it; they *hunger and thirst after Righteousness*, [which others in this case never do] and have some hope to be satisfied: They long to hear the Voice, and see the loving Countenance of Christ, and are inwardly upheld with hope of both. Who can tell, say they in their Hearts, but that the Lord may be intreated to turn away his fierce Anger, that we perish not here according to our desert? It is our self-harming league with Sin, that the Lord goeth about to break; were that done, he would not contend nor be angry for ever: When we submit unto him, he will speak unto us, as he did unto *Hagar*; however, we must trust in him, although he should kill us with Hunger and Thirst, in this vast and desolate *Wilderness* of legal Terror and Conviction, where no refreshing Streams do flow.

Use 2. Secondly, The Use may be Instructive, both to Ministers and People. First, To *Ministers*, that they wisely endeavour it, to bring their People into and through this

Wilderness

Wilderness; by presenting and pressing the *Law*, which is God's Instrument to charge Sin upon the Soul, in the true Nature, Root and Fruit thereof; God having imparted some of his own Brightness and Power unto it, for this end. To know how the Law doth this, may give some Light to Ministers in the use thereof: And that may be, 1. By way of Illumination of the Understanding, to see Sin as it is sin, which no word nor means in the World can do beside; because God hath imparted to it the brightness of his own Purity, [so much as he pleased, and thought to be needful for this end] with a searching faculty, undeniably to charge Conscience with all, and every Sin; this supernatural splendor closing with the innate light of Conscience, proceeding in this manner, viz. First, to discover *Actual* Sins, beginning often with some of the most hainous; and going on by degrees to the rest, for number and nature, how many, how foul; and to that end the Law presenteth to the Soul,

First, With her *Sovereignty*, for Constitution and Commission; being made and ordained by him who is infinite in every Attribute, and hath an absolute dominion over our Bodies and Spirits, and sent abroad with a large Commission, to show all Sins unto all sorts impartially; whether they be high or low, rich or poor, prophane or holy; the Law hath a sovereign power, and exerciseth it after

after a regal manner, sparing none.

Secondly, With her Integrity, and Extent. In this *Wilderness*, the Law sheweth Conscience her *Spiritual Authority*, her *Aggravating Faculties*, her *exact Purity*, and that mutual *Dependency*, one Law, and one Member of the Law hath upon another. Her *Spiritual Authority*; to go into the inward Rooms, yea, into every corner of those Rooms, and every crevice of those Corners, where Sin lieth hid, and to search and bring out all Sins, great and small, of Omission and Commission. Like a two-edged Sword, it pierceth to the very Marrow, to the very intents of the Hearts. Her *Aggravating Faculty*, to set forth particular Sins to the Eye, as the Glass doth the spots of the Face, in the most odious Colours, that so Sin may appear exceeding sinful. Her *Exact Purity*, to discover such practices of our Life to be sinful, which we never dreamt of, nor before took notice of, so much as to suspect, *I had not known Sin*, (i. e.) some Sins to be Sins, *but by the Law*; this discovers that to be a Mountain, which before the Sinner judged to be a Mole, and that to be Sin, which before he esteemed Righteousness; and like a Light, exposed to view those Corruptions which lay hid and unseen, in their due proportion. Her *Mutual Dependency*; one Branch doth so hang upon another, that whosoever breaketh one, is guilty of all,

James

James 2. 10. The whole Law is but one Copulative; and this dependance of one Precept with another, and all upon the Law-Maker, [whose Authority is violated and contemned in the breach of one, as well as of all] occasioneth, even one Sin to be so infinitely weighty. Secondly, The Law proceeds to discover *Original Sin*, in the Root and Branches; how we participate in the first sinful Act of *Adam*; how that Guilt is imputed, and how Habitual Corruption is propagated from immediate Parents to all their Posterity, proceeding from them by an ordinary way of Generation, as Poyson is carried from the Fountain to the Cistern; all herent in the Nature, or redounding on the Person, by virtue of the Covenant; and this the Law doth, either by way of *Comparison*, or else by way of positive *Description*, comparing and preferring it for the evil thereof to Actual Sin, as the Root or Cause thereof: *Et quod efficit tale, est magis tale*, is said in Philosophy, and is true in Divinity: Then *describing* it either by Names, or Properties: By *Names* first, calling it the *Old Man*, the *Body of Death*, (as if Death were nothing without this Sin) a *Weight* that *presseth down*, &c. By *Properties* next; and they are especially four, *viz.* *Eminency*, *Predominancy*, *Insensibility*, and *Perpetuity*. For *Eminency*, the Law saith it is a Transcendent Evil, and the worst of all Evils. *Predominancy*;

dominancy; strangely to rule and oversway like a second Nature, which Men often confess, while they say, It is their Nature to do this or that, is to be furious, to swear and curse a little now and then, they cannot help it; 'tis their Nature, when indeed it is the corruption of Nature reigning. *Insensibility*, to keep all the parts in a sleepy peace, that Men are not aware of their danger till they be awakened and brought into this *Wilderness*. *Perpetuity*; to cleave fast unto our Nature, even to the end of our Life. While Blood is in our Veins, Sin is in our Nature; like the *Jebusiter*, this remains as a Thorn in the side, in the Flesh; even when Victory is obtained by Grace, over all Actual Sin in a competent measure, that is still living and stirring, gathering new Forces and breaking into Rebellion ever and anon. Thus the Law bringeth Men into the Wilderness by the work of Illumination. 2. By the work of *Conviction*, whereby the Conscience is brought to this Spiritual assent, that the former Testimony of the Law is true, both for Crime, Object, and Curse denounced; and the Person to a particular application, both of the *Sins* to be *personal*, and of the *sentence* against such Sins and Sinners to be *Legal*: The sum of which Work may be comprised in this practical Syllogism, *viz.* Whosoever is thus Sinful and Cursed according to the Law, is fully miserable; but

but I (faith the assuming Conscience) am thus sinful and cursed, therefore I am fully miserable. What shall I do, miserable Man that I am? who shall deliver me in this vast *Wilderness*? O help, help me for the Lord's sake, I am ready to faint, to sink, to die with fear and grief.

The Spirit by the Ministry of the Law worketh this distinct and sound Conviction divers ways:

1. By removing all Impediments, which are usually observed to hinder this Conviction. One is *natural Deadness* and *penal Hardness*, caused by Love and Custom in some one or many Sins, which, while it is interposed between the Law and Conscience, will not suffer them to close; and so nothing is done till that be in part removed. Another is *Spiritual Sloth*, which is a prevailing Backwardness, and a precipitating Carelessness, to consider what the Law discovereth, and concludeth against Sin. Men naturally love their ease and quiet, they would not be disturbed. A third is *carnal Craft*, to pretend Religion, and to perform all outward Duties, and yet all the while to keep Sin in the Heart untouch'd, to remain as habitually and delightfully unclean as ever.

This Soul-destroying Subtilty appears, 1. In a readiness to shift off Sin and Reproofs from our selves to others. The Minister met with such an one to day, there was

a Lesson for him indeed, &c. 2. In loathing
 a sound plain-searching Ministry, (as for
 Eyes do the Sun) which goes about to an-
 swer all the Objections of a natural Heart
 against the Goodness of Divine Truth. Thus
 the Law removes Impediments.

2. It worketh Conviction, by applying
 unto the Soul and Conscience,

[1.] Gentle Expostulations, frequently
 and movingly here and there ; as unto *Adam*
 and *Gebazi*, *Gen.* 3. 9. 2 *Kin.* 5. 26. Tell
 me, poor Soul, was it not even so ? hast not
 thou done thus and thus ? went not my Spi-
 rit with thee ? and was not mine Eye over
 thee ? Confess thy Sin, ease thy self, and
 give glory to God. O how loving is the Lord,
 even in his Terrors and Enditements ! In
 the midst of Judgment he remembreth Mercy.
 Tho his Robes be red, they are not without
 some streamings of white ; and if he be com-
 pelled to pronounce Judgment, as it was said
 of *Augustus*, he doth it even with Tears in
 his Eyes.

[2.] Instances very pertinent, and those
 either direct, as *Psal.* 50. 18. &c. or *Parabo-
 lical*. As *Nathan* dealt with *David*, so the
 Lord deals with those whom he intends to
 restrain and renew. You are the Men, saith
 he, that have been so much addicted to, and
 delighted with Idleness, Wantonness, Luxu-
 ry, Pride, Covetousness, Slandring, Drunken-
 ness, Sweating, Lying, and the like.

[3.] Threat-

[3.] Threatnings are added where the former avail not. *Cursed is every one that doth not all which is written in the Law.* He shall be pursued with Judgments of divers Natures to one end, sometimes with prosperity on the right, and anon with adversity on the left hand ; and last of all, which is the worst of all, - dying impenitently, he must needs be damned. Thus the Lord thundereth in his Law against some, whom nevertheless he intends to sanctify and save ; as a Father may threaten and terrify that Child whom he intends to make his Heir. But withal you must know, that he doth inwardly and secretly support them, that they dash not upon Presumption, nor sink under final Despair. So that at length being driven from all their hiding Places, they are brought into this *Wilderness*, and forced freely to take upon themselves all those Sins discovered by the Law, to fall down before God, and to acknowledge their Guilt and Desert before the Throne of his Majesty, resolving there to lie prostrate till he raise them in Mercy. Now say they, we see, we feel, we know, how true the Word of God is ; how faithfully such Ministers dealt with us, while we slighted and laughed them to scorn ; and how deceitful Sin is, that appears at first small, sweet, and clean, when as it is weighty, bitter, and filthy. They cry, who will take this Dagger out of my Heart ? this Mill-stone off my Back ?

this Fire out of my Loins? this Sting out of my Conscience? Now the seeming Sweetness of Sin is turned to Gall. O Sin! how grievous is thy remembrance? *Away ye wicked* we will henceforth endeavour to keep the Commandments of our God. No more Swearing, much less Perjury, no Drunkenness, no more Uncleanness. When they knock at the door, the answer is, O thou are they that cost us dear at such a time, yet feel the sad Impressions of our former Afflictions for them; we find a Pardon no Enterprize, nor Repentance so pleasing a Position; we would not for all the World be under that Anger of God, nor feel one drop of his scalding Indignation, which we have perceived for those Offences. Thus *the bitter Child dreads the Fire*. And this (with Submission) is the Course that *Ministers* must take in opening and pressing the Law which is God's Instrument effectually to charge the Conscience with Sin, and to bring a Person into this *Wilderness*.

2^{dly}. The People may learn to join with the Lord in his Ambassadors, so to further this Work of the Law, when and where it is once begun; and to follow the Lord under his Cloud, and after this Fire, into this *Wilderness*. And that,

1. By a serious Meditation of these many *Impediments*, which keep Men out of it, or hinder them much in the way towards it

when

when the Lord is about to bring them into it. Eye them, that you may avoid them. For instance, to esteem of the Law as a *strange thing*, as not appertaining to them, or wherein they are little or nothing concerned; to interpose some beloved Sin between these two Lights of the Law and Conscience, that they cannot join. This alone hindered *Herod's* Conversion under *John's* piercing Ministry, the interposition of his *Herodias* caused a fearful and final Eclipse. So likewise to go away unthankfully and carelessly from a good Discourse, doth hinder the Work, and quench the Sparks which might have bred a Flame.

2. By frequent Meditation on divers good Subjects moving this way, as

(1.) Upon the Mercies of God bestowed upon you in particular from time to time. This Course the Lord took to humble *David*, 2 Sam. 12. 7, 8, 9. And whosoever hath tried will say, It is a very piercing way to bring the Heart into a through and kindly grief. I have read of one, who reading a Pardon sent him from the King, fell a weeping, and burst out into these Words, *A Pardon hath done that which Death could not do; it hath made my Heart to relent.* As the Sugar-Loaf is dissolved, and weeps it self away, when it is dipp'd in Wine: so will Penitents dissolve, and melt themselves away in the sweet sence of Divine Love, and their neglect or abuse of it. Without doubt the very

Behaviour of the *Prodigal's* Father brake his Heart with more thawings and kindly mourning, than ever his former Hardship and Misery did. O this ! that ever he should run to meet him ! that he should fall upon his Neck, and kiss him ! This kindness of his Lips wounded his Heart with the deeper sence and judging of his own unkindness. When the Surface of the Water is glazed with Ice, the Sun-beams dissolve it : such operation hath the Grace of Christ upon frozen Hearts, which are never truly melted into Contrition, but by Evangelical Beams. Surely when a Sinner shall consider the great Love, the sweetest Kindness, the freest Pardons offered, the choicest Mercies bestowed, his Heart cannot but melt into a River. What, all these to and for me, Lord ? yea, for thee : What, after such deep Rebellions and Refusals ? yea, after all, and that most freely and willingly. Good Lord ! how can the Soul but weep and mourn now !

(2.) Meditate for that purpose upon the *Justice and Power* of God, able to *revenge the Quarrel of his Covenant*, and to bruise all his proud and stout Enemies with a *Rod of Iron*. He is not only a Rock of Refuge to the Godly, but also a Rock of Destruction to dash the Impenitent in pieces. The strength of the Rock is seen, as in upholding the House that is built upon it ; so in breaking the Ships that dash against it. The force of Fire is mani-

manifested, as in refining the Gold, so in consuming the Dross. *There is none like unto thee, O Lord; thou art great, and thy Name is great; who would not fear thee, thou King of Nations?* Jer. 10. 6. And, *It is a fearful thing to fall into the Hands of the Living God,* Heb. 10. 31. *As a Lion, he tears in pieces the Adversaries,* Psal. 50. 22. There is no standing before him, if his *Wrath be kindled, though but a little.*

(3.) Meditate upon sinful Nature, there is both Guilt and Filth, such a Nature which Sighs and Tears may better express than Words. We were in *Adam* as in a common Root, and he sinning, we became guilty: *Rom. 5. 12. In whom all have sinned.* By his Treason our Blood is tainted, and this Guilt brings Shame with it, as its Twin, *Rom. 6. 21.* And not only is the Guilt of *Adam's* Sin imputed, but the Poison of his Nature is disseminated to us; our Virgin-Nature is defiled, the Heart is spotted, *1 Kin. 8. 38.* How then can the Actions be pure? If the Water be foul in the Well, it cannot be clean in the Bucket. *We are all as an unclean thing.* Hell it self, which is the sole Receptacle of Sin and Sinners, is not in some respect more filthy than Mans Nature. Poor Man is like a Patient under the Physician's hands, that hath no sound part, his Head bruised, his Liver swelled, his Lungs perished, his Blood enflamed, his Feet gangren'd. Thus it is before

Grace comes; *Isa.* 1. 6. Yea, though your Nature be changed, there are Remainders of this Corruption. The best Saint alive, who is taken out of the Grave of Sin, yet smells of the Grave-clothes still upon him. As *Basil* said of the Rose, that it was a fair Flower, but it wanted not its Prickles, that might put him in mind of the Curse the Earth was subject unto; so in the best there are those Remainders and Relicks of Sin, which might cause them to mourn and weep before the Lord.

(4.) Meditate on the Lord Jesus Christ, his Suffering, Agony, how sharp and bitter it was; [if your Heart be as hard as an *Adamant*, the Blood of this *Scape-goat* will soften it.] It affected his *Head*, for upon the foresight he began to be amazed, *Mark* 14. 33. It affected his *Heart*, for he began to droop, for faint, *Math.* 26. 37. See how he was affected in his Soul, (the innocent for the innocent) it was overcast with an heaviness to death: yea, in his Body, he sweat drops of Blood, *Luke* 22. 44. Meditate on his Sufferings, see if they will not move you to sorrow. The sight of *Cesar's* bloody Robes greatly affected the People of *Rome*, and edged them to revenge. When *St. Augustin* read the Story of *Dido*, he could not but weep: And when *Julius Cesar* saw *Pompey's* Head, tho' his Enemy, he wept, and refused at his return to *Rome* to ride in Triumph for his Victo-

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Victory. The like did *Charles* the 5th upon
his great Victory over the *French King* at
the Siege of *Paris*. How much more may
the Meditation of *Christ's* Sufferings, who
was our Friend, suffering for our Sins, melt
our Hearts? See him in the *Wilderness* of
Suffering, it may bring you into the *Wilderness*
of Sorrow.

(5.) Meditate upon the dangerous Con-
sequence, if you have not Sin charged upon
you here in this Life. If you follow not God
into this *Wilderness* of Trouble for Sin now,
but still cleave to *Egypt*, preferring the mo-
mentary Pleasures of Sin to this *Manna*, be
assured one of these two Evils will follow,
either the Lord will break this League and
Union between Sin and your Hearts, or else
he will permit and order that Disorder, till
you attain the fulness of Hardness and Blind-
ness. When Conscience shall be awakened,
and Sin charged upon the Soul suddenly and
fully, both for number and weight, your jovi-
al Meetings, excessive Drinkings, and Hea-
thenish Quaffings, will have weeping and
howling here or hereafter; when it will not
be the whole World on Fire, nor the terrible
presence of the Judg, coming with Thrill-
sounding Trumpets, and Troops of Angels
only, nor Hell and all the Devils there, shall
be so fearfully heavy and unsupportable; but
Sin so deceitfully pleasing now, appearing
then more ugly than Hell, or the foulest Fiend
there;

there; committed now by degrees, one after another, some this Day, more next, now an Oath, than a Lye, but presented and professed and imputed altogether, even to the sinking of a Soul. O think of this often, all you in whom the custom of Sinning hath taken away the sence of Sinning! if any thing, this will help to awaken and bring you into this *Wilderness*.

3. You may help the Work forward, by special application of what you hear; when the Law is personally applied, the legal work upon the matter is ended; and when the Gospel is believed, the whole is perfected. As it was in the Creation of the World, and in the Conception of Christ, [so soon as ever his blessed Virgin-Mother did close by her understanding and will with the Word and Message of the Angel, the Hypostatical Union was begun in her Womb; as *Zanchy* following *Gregory* and *Damascene*, is of opinion] so it is in the Regeneration, and Sacramental nutrition of the new Man, he said it was done; no sooner is the Word applied, but the Work is wrought. Put it not off therefore to others, but say, Certainly this is my case, I am the Man, that have done so and so; that have such an Heart, so hard, so unclean and deceitful, &c. Then hear what threatnings are denounced against such Offences, then see what judgments have been inflicted upon the like Offenders; this will

will pluck the Plumes, and allay the Jollity of any Person. This is the way to draw proud Minions, and roaring Gallants, out of their Fools Paradise, into a World of saving trouble, to see and bewail their monstrous Vanities and youthful Folly. And here let all such be advised to stay, till the Lord be pleased to speak unto them, and to bring them as by a Hand of Comfort into *Canaan*. O pluck not off the Plaster because it smarts; refuse not the Potion because it is bitter; confine your selves to his Rules of Physick; break not those Bonds, and cast not off these Cords from you; haste not out of this Wilderness too soon, because it is Solitary; the end and issue will support Patience; he that believes will not make haste to apply unreasonable Comforts. The Lord will be seen in the Mount, and heard in the cool of the Day. The Corrosive must eat out Corruption to the bottom, before any healing Salve can well be applied, that so there may be a perfect Cure: The *Law* is that Corrosive, promises that healing Oyl; both must have their time and place for Working: O let not, let not preposterous haste prevent good speed, be more desirous to be ready for Comfort, than to have it; and then doubt not but it will be enjoyed time enough.

Use 3. Thirdly, The use may serve for Consolation. This Doctrine, like the Carcass of the Lion, which *Sampson* found, and therein

therein a swarm of Bees with sweet Honycombs, yieldeth sweet Consolation to such as have been, or at present are exercised in this uncomfortable condition. *No Affliction is for the present joyous, but rather greivous: Especially, a wounded Conscience who can bear?* To be alone in a vast *Wilderness*, encompassed with Sins, with divers and horrid Fears, and which is heaviest of all, to have the Wrath of the *Almighty* presented to a solitary Soul, no Friend in sight, but all apprehended Enemies to him; this is a lamentable Case: Yet here is comfort for all this, if the Eye be once opened as *Hagar's* was, or the Servants of the Prophet, to see a *Fountain* near us opened for Sin and Uncleaness, to see the Mountains covered with armed Souldiers, and Chariots of Fire on our side; if we once look up and consider the end which the Lord proposeth in so doing, it will never after be so doleful: he can lead you through the Sea, feed you in the *Wilderness*, and easily limit and destroy all your Enemies. Nay, in time, he will do it: And if the Lord be on our side, we need not fear ten Thousands hemming us in on every side.

Many there be in the World to whom this Comfort belongs, who will not take it; and they run into two Extremes; either such who have drunken so deep of this Cup of Legal Terror, that they judg themselves
hated

hated of God, as if none of his Beloved had
 ever been in that Case; when as his own dear
 Son was so far brought into this *Wilderness*,
 as to cry out, *My God, my God, why hast thou*
forsaken me? And here it is a merciful Pro-
 mise made unto a beloved People, an ordina-
 ry Course which he doth take with those that
 are dear unto him; *through many Tribulations*
 to bring them into possession of a Kingdom.
 Let not Satan, nor your own slavish Fears,
 so far prepossess you, as to deny audience
 unto God, when he shall be pleased to speak
 unto our Hearts. Or else they are such who
 have had either none or so little of it in their
 apprehensions, that they deem themselves
 still in the State of Nature, because they were
 never humbled enough, as such and such;
 they were never in this *Wilderness*, and so
 consequently never yet in the ready way to
 Heaven. Therefore they refuse Christ, and all
 Comfort offered: no Promise, they say, be-
 longs to them.

To such I would say, True it is, that all
 ordinary Converts are humbled, all are brought
 into this *Wilderness*, and all taste more or less
 at one time or other of this Cup of Legal
 Terrour. The Soul that is so prone to Sin
 must be stayed, Conscience must be charged
 with the guilt and weight of Sin, and pursu-
 ed with deserved Anger from one place to a-
 nother, till the Soul be weary of Sin, and
 the Party oft-times so afraid, that he dares
 not

not be alone, and yet finds little ease in Company. But then you must know withal, that the Lord is a free Agent, he hath not limited himself to one degree or measure ; so neither can any Man set a stint, to say, Who-soever shall be saved must be humbled to this and this degree. God cannot be tract in his goings, none can find out his Footsteps : *His ways are past finding out* ; they are like the way of an Eagle in the Air. Besides, all need it not alike, and he works it diversly upon most, according to the number, nature, and continuance of their Sins, and with reference to that Employment he intends them for after ; as hath been formerly noted.

A familiar Instance may serve to bring the meaning hereof to every Capacity. Of Locks some are new, and easily opened ; others old and rusty, and must with violence be broken open ; of Stones some are harder than others : So of Persons, some are more glued unto, and faster riveted in Sin, than others. *Paul* was knock'd down, while *Lydia* had her Heart gently opened. *Zaccheus*, a Publican and Extortioner, is not stricken from the Tree which he climbs, by any Rays of Divine Majesty shining upon him ; but is like ripe Fruit gathered by the Hand, not shaken off by the tempestuous Winds. If an old Adulterer, or a deboist lewd Companion, be once brought into this Wilderness, he is dreadfully handled, his foul Sins pursue him like *Achan's* Hounds

Hounds, Hell-fire seems to flie in his Eyes, and he fears sinking every moment. Such as have taken much delight in Sin, are made for their health to vomit up their sweet Morfels with much bitterness. O my Drunkenness, crieth out one in such a place, and with such Company! O my Fornication and Adultery with such and such, saith another! Once pleasant, now bitter as Gall and Wormwood: Wo unto us, that ever we were born, to go on so long in Sin, &c. So that by this time all the Town and Country hear and speak of them; such a Change cannot escape wonder. Thus the Case is difficult with some. As a Disease come to a Paroxysm is hardly cured: And as where the Enemy is stronger, there the Victory is more difficult. Now for others, who have been by careful Parents more restrainedly brought up, and religiously educated; they may be brought into it softly and by degrees, not knowing when or how; thus far they are come, they hate Sin, all, in all sorts; they love Grace and good Company, God's favour they prize above all Contentments, loving and cleaving unto Jesus Christ with sincere Hearts; good Duties they perform, and dare not often omit them in private or in public; and a good Conscience they desire to keep towards God and Man; they are the same in words and deeds; to the exactest of their care and sincere intention; charitable to the Poor, *doing good to all, especially to the Household of Faith.* This they

they know, but that they were ever in this *Wildernes*, they remember not. Many times, and unto many Persons, the Lord hideth the violence of this Terror, knowing their weak and tender disposition, and affords them a saving Proportion by continuance: it is long upon them that have least, and of shorter continuance in them that have most. Let none measure themselves by others. A wise Physician proportioneth his Receipt to the Constitution of the Patient, else he might sooner kill than cure. Who will say, his Portion can do him no good, because he had not so many drams as another had, when as his Body would not bear it, neither doth his Disease require it? The Lord knoweth best what he hath to do, and how. Leave it to him, and look rather to the *Quality*, than to the *Quantity*; that you be utterly driven out of your selves, to rest effectually on Christ, as your Lord and Saviour, and then fear not.

Quest.

But how may a Man know, whether he have been at any time brought into this Wildernes in truth?

Answ.

By the Manner of working it, and by the Nature of his Sorrow.

i. By

1. By the *manner* of working, as hath been formerly described. When a Person is so far humbled by the Law, as that he acknowledgeth both Crime and Curse, and hath nothing to say for himself, but to cry out with Tears, *I am unclean, I am unclean*: When his Plea is an Appeal, and his Suit is deeply set and closely followed for Mercy and Grace, it is a good sign.

2. By the *nature* of this Sorrow and Grief; which if it be only to *restrain* him, it is shallow and short; like a Land-flood occasioned by a Storm, which when it is over, the Flood is gone too: But if it be a preparative to Renovation, then it is deep and lasting; more or less during Life; it is a Spring which continually runs. Neither would God have the Wounds of Godly Sorrow to be so closed up, as not to bleed afresh upon every good occasion. And this Godly Sorrow may be discerned from all counterfeit shewes of Hypocritical and Vain-glorious Mourning. Thus:

1. By the disposition and desire of the Party in whom it is, to keep it secret: Although he can rest no where, nor answer himself, being in little ease; yet is often ashamed any should know it. *Hypocrisie* loves a Stage to set her Part upon; to get Credit from Men, rather than to glorifie God, *Mat. 6. 16*. But *Ille vere dolet qui sine teste dolet*. He grieves only that grieves privately. So much is con-

tained in that Prophecy, *Zach. 12, 12.* The Land shall mourn, every Family apart. To shew the soundness of their Sorrow; their sincerity by their Secrefie. They were se-
 vered, to shew, that they wept not for com-
 pany; *Sed sponte & proprio affectu*, as *Calvin*
 hath it, but of their own accord, and out of
 pure affection.

2. By the quality of the *Confessors*, which
 at length after much a-do, he chuseth to
 make known his case unto; even the most
 Orthodox and Impartial *Divines*, that excel
 in Sanctity, Experience and soundness of
 Judgment, who he thinks will not flatter
 him, and dare not deceive him for a World.
Judas being troubled, went to the *Scribes*
 and *Pharisees*, and they cared for none of
 these things, but turn him off, with a *What*
is that to us, see thou to it: This is all the
 help and comfort they can afford him. *Mise-*
erable Comforters! *Physicians* of no value. The
 Devil and his, *Imps* love to bring Men into
 the Briars, and there leave them: As fami-
 liar Devils forsake their Witches, when they
 have once brought them into Fetters. [If
 you confess your selves to a Priest and not to
 God, said that Martyr, you shall have the
 reward that *Judas* had; who confessed to a
 Priest, and afterward went and hanged him-
 self.] But they that are kindly toucht, with
 those in the *Acts* of the Apostles, *Chap. 2.*
ver. 37. Haste to those which wounded them,
 even

2. *The* even to the Disciples, saying, *Men and Bre-*
To *thren, what shall we do to be saved?*

3. By a restless hatred of Sin, wherefore-
their *ver* seen ; It is as fearful and odious now, as
re *the* Devil was heretofore : His Eye and Hand
r *are* toward it, his desire and endeavour is to
com- *have* it discover'd and kill'd, resolving to
Calvin *do* and suffer any thing rather than to sin ;
out *of* give him any Plague, except the plague of
which *an* hard, unclean Heart : He hateth Sin, not
eth *only* in the publick acts, which might shame
to *him* ; but also in secret thoughts, which
most *might* stain and defile him. The vengeance
excel *of* Sin is not only frightful, but the venom
ls *of* Sin is distastful ; he fears Corruption, not
latter *only* as it is a Fire burning, but as it is a Coal
World *that* is blacking.

Further, This Work may be known by
the *fruits* and Effects of it. For,

First, If it be right, it is followed with
a *full* and free confession of Sin : The Person
The *that* is in a *Wilderness*-condition, confesseth
into *more* than all the World know, or can ac-
mi- *cuse* him of. As the sensible Sick-man, re-
hey *late*th all his Distempers to the Physician,
[*he* resteth not in generals, but descendeth to
to *particulars*. How frequent and full is *David*
the *in* confessing his Murther and Adultery ?
o *What* an History doth *Nehemiah* make of *Is-*
m- *rael's* Sins, in his Prayer to God ? How ex-
ith *act* doth *Paul* describe his Madness against
2. *the* Church, his Blasphemy against Christ ?
m, *the* Church, his Blasphemy against Christ ?
en

And all to this end, that themselves may be the more ashamed, and God the more glorified.

Quest. *But may not Wicked, Graceless Men make confession of Sin?*

Ans. Yes; for *Judas* did, and others may also: But see the difference. He confessed to Men, but not to God, and by his confession sought only to ease his Heart: As Drunkards by Vomiting rid their Stomachs. Thus, as *Melancthon* relates it, *Chronico. p. 5. Latomus* of *Lovain* confessed, *Inter horrendos mugitus se contra Conscientiam adversatum esse veritati*: Roaring and crying out, That against his Conscience he had persecuted the Truth of God. In trouble of Mind all will out. Conscience, like *Sampson's* Wife, will not conceal the Riddle: Like *Fulvia*, a whorish Woman, who declared all the secrets of her foolish Lover *Cneius*, a noble Roman. But these Confessions of Graceless Men are not from the concurrence of a judicious active Will, but rather, as the sparkles forced by the Collision of Flints, elicited by the impressions of appearing and urging Evils: Like *Pharaoh's* obedience, forced from Judgments, and nothing else; as that of some *Mariners* in a Storm, who in the Calm, turn as wicked as before; and court the return of those Goods they cast out in a Tempestuous season, when the Winds are silenced. Here is no true brokenness of Heart, no love of Holiness.

Secondly,

Secondly, It is accompanied with Self-condemnation for Sin. The true penitent hath a County Palatinate within his Bosom, and atraigns and judges himself. *Abraham* crys out, *I am but dust and ashes*: Dust minds us of Mortality, Ashes of Fire; as if he had deserved both. *Jacob* saith, *I am less than the least of all thy Mercies*, Gen. 32. 10. The Centurion, *I am unworthy thou shouldst come under my Roof*. *St. Peter*, *Depart from me, O Lord, for I am a sinful Man*. *Bishop Hooper*, in our *Martyrologie*, *Lord, I am Hell, thou art Heaven; I a sink of Sin, thou a Fount of Grace*. This is one chief part of Self-condemnation, to acknowledg that the utmost Wrath and Severity of God, is justly due to such Sins as we have committed. For tho gracious Persons by their Sins do not actually become subject to the Wrath of God and his Vengeance, yet they meritoriously make such Persons liable to Death; so that a true Penitent under the apprehensions of his Sins, may say truly, as the *Prodigal* did, *I am no more worthy to be called thy Son!*

Thirdly, The practice and course of Sin is stayed; no more Swearing, no more wanton Dalliance, no more drunken Meetings. Tho he cannot but sin, yet he doth not will Sin: It is not his Trade; yea, all the ways and means are cut off, which did, or might provoke, or succour Corruption. As *Generals* do in besieging a Town or Castle, they de-

prive them of all such ways and means, whereby they might provide for themselves: Or as the Men of *Abel* dealt with *Sheba* the Son of *Bichri*, they cut off his Head, and cast it over to *Joab*, that he might depart, 2 *Sam.* 20. 22. So did *Zacheus*, *Luke* 19. 8. in restitution and contribution, he pulled down the tents of Sin: And as *Mary Magdalen* dealt with her wanton Eyes and whorish Locks, she wept Rivers of Tears with the one, and wiped our Saviour's Feet with the other: Loth to have done so before. It is usual with Men that would destroy the brood of some Beasts and Birds, they pull down their Nests, and destroy their Dens: So it is with the true Penitent in respect of Sin; down with all now, that they would uphold before.

Fourthly, There followeth a great Love to a sound-searching Ministry, that will fully search and try the deceitful Heart, and batter the deceitful holds of Sin. *Threatnings* are welcome, that shake the proud, stony Heart, and dash *Babels* Brats against the Wall; I mean the crawling Vermin of noisome Lusts. O strike, thou Man of God, strike in Christ's Name, and spare not, burn and cut here; O here is an impure, hard Heart, as ever was harboured in any Breast! And then goeth most chearfully, most thankfully, and best contented, when he is struck to the quick: What a blessed opportunity

was

was this, happy that I lived to see this day, to hear such a Sermon. If we hate an Enemy, nothing will satisfie but his death.

Fifthly, There remains still many fears, and an holy jealousy, that every Sin he reades or hears of, is his; *Master is it I?* As it is reported of *Socrates*, that when he walked in the Streets and saw any Person disorder'd, would say to himself, *Am I such a one?* And as *Master Bradford* did, when he looked into the lewd Lives of others: And so do all humble Christians. Nay, commonly, in this case he takes all to himself; I have been this, and I am thus, and deserve that: He needs neither Accuser, nor Judg, but is ready to cast the first stone at himself.

Thus the intended Convert is brought into the *Wilderness* of Spiritual Trouble, where he yet remains a miserable Spectacle, in Chains under Bondage, tossing to and fro, sighing and looking about, now upon himself, where he seeth his Chains, but no power to loose them; then abroad to see if there be any near; but there is none to hear or help: Finally, he raiseth up his Eyes towards Heaven, in such an earnest, humble, fixed manner, as if he would never leave, till he heard some word of comfort; for which here is a Promise, which comes in the next place to be handled.

— *I will speak unto her Heart.*

Containing the third General of the Text,
viz. The first infusion for Apprehension,
 or actual excitation of Sanctifying
 Grace.

In which Promise is presented to your
 view,

1. The subject of this Evangelical Work,
 and that is the [*Heart*]. Instruments work
 directly upon the outward Man only, he
 hath his seat in Heaven that works upon the
Heart. This is as Fire among the Elements,
 that doth assimilate every thing to it self;
 or as the *Primum Mobile* to the inferiour
 World, which carries all the inferiour Orbs
 with it; the first Mover, or great Wheel in
 a Clock, once moved, moves with it all the
 rest; the Tongue, Eyes, Hands, Feet, all
 move to the motion of the Heart, and when
 God hath once fram'd the Soul to his Disci-
 pline, by the ministry of the Law, then he
 takes the Heart to be a fit hearer, and speaks
 unto it.

2. The manner of Execution, [*I will
 speak unto, or above*]. Two things may be
 conceived as promised herein:

First, To speak comfortably, to a solitary,
 dis-

disconsolate Soul. So much doth the *Hebraism* every-where import. *Comfort ye my People, speak comfortably to Jerusalem, Isa. 40. 1.* The words are originally as here, *דברו על-לב*, *Speak to the Heart of Jerusalem, (i.e.)* speak things grateful to her; comfort, raise up, cheer; as both the *Syriack*, and *Chaldee Paraphrase* do take it. As it was with the *Jews*, when God gave the Law to *Israel* by *Moses*, they heard the Thunder, and saw the Lightning, but neither heard nor saw God; so it is in this preparative work of Faith, Men see the bright purity of the Law, they hear many Woes and Curses denounced, but God in Christ they neither hear nor see, till he further enlighten them, and raise them up by speaking to their Hearts.

Secondly, To speak *Victoriously*; above all the strength of that natural resistability which is in every untamed and unsanctified Heart. In few words, it is thus much, *I will cheer and change her.* Whence Ministers are fitly called *Comforters*, 1 *Thess. 2. 11.* and the Gospel, a Peace-offering, a word of Comfort and *Reconciliation*. How the Lord works this, whether as a Moral Persuader only, by proposing Objects; or as a Physical Agent, determining the Intellect, changing the Will, and ordering the whole Business both for efficacy and event? How the *Will* of Man hath it self towards the Grace of God in the act

act of Conversion, hath been, and is the great question of the Christian World. Divines of all sorts are beating about it, some to defend, others to bolt out the Truth: *Pe-lagians* with the *Jesuits* on one hand, are for the strength of Nature, and liberty of the Will, to accept or refuse the Voice of God: The *Primitive Fathers*, from *Augustine* downwards, with most *Protestants*, and the *Dominican Friars* on the other hand, are more for the Glory of God's Free-grace, *Who worketh both to will and to do of his own good Pleasure*. Here will be nothing interposed in order to any determination of this Controversie; only the studious, whom it may concern, are refer'd

* *Chamier. Tom. 3. operum, lib. 3. Cameron. respons. ad Epist. docti viri & alibi. Zanch, lib. 5. de Nat. Dei. D. Rivet, comment, in Hof. & in disput. 13. D. Twiss. in defens. Perk. & Vind. gra.*

to what is extant, * and may yield better satisfaction. For others who are willing to rest in plain Truths, and fear to offend by curious enquiries, they may take what follows for answer, viz.

First, God speaketh and worketh after a secret, if not an unexpressible manner: Divine Graces curiously and mysteriously insinuate themselves, and the impressions of the Will are extremely nice: Therefore Men should not be rash in determining, nor over-bold in presenting to the Eye, what God hath veiled; endeavouring

s the younging to make Windows in God's Closet,
 Da and to unclasp his secret Books. St. Augu-
 me to line's Rule is surely safe; *Præstat dubitare de*
 e Po occultis, quam de incertis litigare. And his
 e for Counsel is very prudent, viz. *Compescenda est*
 f the humana temeritas id quod non est non quærat, ne
 God: quod est inveniatur. Contra. Manich. l. 8. c. 1.
 own- (i. e.) We must bridle our Temerity, and
 mini- check our Curiosity, lest we pursue what
 r the is not revealed, and find that which is.
 both Let all take heed of soaring too high, lest
 sure, they be scorched, and wading too deep, lest
 r to they be drowned. There are some things
 only we may *nescire sine crimine*, not know with-
 err'd out blame, but cannot know them *sine dis-*
 and crimine, without danger: And in respect of
 sta- these, a learned Ignorance is to be preferr'd
 who to an ignorant Learning. Stobæus reports of
 in Thales, that he gazing on the Stars, fell into
 fear a Pit; so may all pryers into God's Secrets
 en- be suffered to fall into the Pit of Error.

ke Secondly, Man hath certainly lost his free-
 ver, dom to Good, by his first choice of Evil.
 eth *Seipsum perdit & liberum arbitrium*, as St.
 x- Augustin hath it. Man can move no more
 sly of, or by himself in Spiritual things especi-
 nd ally, without preventing and assisting Grace,
 ly than a dead Man can in Na-
 in turals naturally*, no more
 ng than a Worm can fly. And
 a- therefore Luther, with St.
 g Augustin before him, in op-

* According to
 the Church of
 England, as the
 teacheth, Art. 10.

position

position of the other side, thought it was better to style it *servum arbitrium*, a *servile* rather than a *free Will*. Though some kind of Freedom cannot be denied to be essential and unseparable from the Will. If we consider this power of Man as in the lower Region, he is not *naturally* but *morally* dead, and as a dead Man is not able to produce any Vital Actions, so neither can any natural Man produce any Spiritual Action. *Quid boni operari potest perditus, nisi quantum fuit à perditione liberatus? Victore peccato, amissum est liberum arbitrium; non nisi ad peccatum valet, ut malè agendo sit damnabilis ancilla. O humana Natura! O Adam! Quando sanus eris non stetisti, & tuis viribus surrexisti? Ecce dico & ego quod qui superbè sapiunt, ut suæ voluntatis viribus tantum existiment esse tribuendum, hi non posse credere in Christum, &c. August.*

Thirdly, That no Creature, nor created Instrument, can reach to work upon the Will; the frame thereof is too high, and the temper divine: God only can change and order it. Which indeed he doth, working upon Man as upon an intelligent Creature, *suaviter fleñdo, non violenter torquendo*, in a way agreeable to his Frame and Constitution, without committing a Rape upon any faculty; first enlightning the Mind, then effectually and sweetly persuading the Will, to yield by surrender, and accept of Grace, whereby the whole Man is enabled to co-ope-

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ate in the use and exercise thereof ; as will
 appear in the sequel ; only first observe the
 contents of this Promise, as it may be drawn
 out into two Theological Conclusions, *viz.*

First, *That it is the Heart which is chiefly
 wrought upon, in the work of Conversion.* Call
 it the Heart, the Will, or the inner Man,
 or what else ; it is that within us, which no
 Instrument nor finite Power can reach unto ;
 And herein this differeth from the former
 Work ; the *Understanding* was chiefly touch-
 ed in that, the *Will* in this ; which is attend-
 ed as a King, with all the rest of the inferi-
 our Faculties and Senses. A good *Will* is the
 good Tree, that maketh the *Fruit* good ; and a
 bad *Will* is the bad Tree, that maketh the *Fruit*
 bad. As all the evil or good of a Tree cometh
 from the Root, so doth all the evil or good of a
 Man come from his *Will* ; and till this be
 sanctified, till this be renewed, nothing can
 be good in him. The Eyes may look, the
 Tongue may talk, and the Feet may in Men's
 apprehensions be moving towards Heaven,
 and yet the *Heart* all the while may be bent
 Hell-ward : As Men rowing in a Boat, look
 one way, but drive a contrary Course, and
 intend another way : The outward Man
 may be seemingly Converted, without any
 saving change in the inward, but the *inner*
Man cannot be long without the other ; as the
 Candle in the Lanthorn will appear by its
 own Light ; and as the Diamond, or rich
 Jew-

Jewel, will cast a sparkling Lustre, sooner or later before the Eyes of others. Therefore our Gracious Lord and Wise Physician, takes the surest and soundest way to work a perfect Cure. Give him the Heart, and the rest will quickly follow. It is the Heart that is *hard*; by speaking to it, he *softens* it; it is the Heart that is *unclean*, by speaking to it, he *sanctifieth* it; it is the Heart that is *poor*, by speaking he doth *enrich* it; it is the Heart that is *distressed*, with fears and doubts, by speaking unto, he *comforteth* and *confirmeth* it; it is the Heart that is *most out of order*, by speaking to, he brings it into a *spiritual frame*. Ezek. 36. 25, 26. *Then will I sprinkle clean Water upon you, and you shall be clean. A new Heart will I give you, and a new Spirit will I put within you, &c.*

Thus the truth of this Point shineth with its own Lustre. We will pass from it with the resolution of a Case here to be propounded, *viz.* All this I believe, may some Person say, but how may I discern when my Heart is thus wrought upon?

Ans. 1. When it is *tender*; not in the present act or exercise of Hearing only, but after, while you meditate on your Sins, as David did, Psal. 51. *Against thee, thee only have I sinned.* He doth even drown himself in Tears: Or, upon God's Mercies in Christ, upon any relation of the Churches distress, at Home or Abroad, not only as they

the Men, but as they are Members of Christ; both being melting Considerations; and nothing can bring the Heart to this temper, but the fulfilling of this promise.

2. When it closeth with God's *Precepts* and *Promises* together; desirous to do the one, as delighted to believe the other. Where true Conversion is wrought, the *Will* is master'd, of unwilling is made willing; and ready to chuse what it once abhorred. *Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?* Now the Heart makes a stand at nothing, objecteth nothing, it is as willing to a word of *Command*, as to a word of *Promise*; to the *Work*, as to the *Reward*. It is all over yielding, and submitting. Which is all that shall be said here, to the Case propounded; because occasion will be offer'd to speak more fully to it shortly, in the amplification of this Point.

Doct. 2. A second Conclusion from this Promise is this, *viz.* *That it is one and the same Hand which woundeth and healeth, which casteth down and raiseth up; Which brings into the Wilderness, and after speaks unto the Heart.* [I will allure, and I will speak]. As the rust of *Achilles* his Sword only, cured the Wounds which it made. *Psal. 34. 18.* *The Lord is nigh to them that are of a broken Heart, and saveth such as are of a contrite Spirit.* He breaks the Vessel, and then pours out the Oyl of Salvation into it. *Hos. 6. 1.* *He hath torn, and he will heal us; he hath smitten,*
and

and he will bind us up. The Hand of God even when it strikes, drops Balsam; his very Rods are bound up in Silk and softness, and beforehand dipt in Balm. He wounds that he may heal, and in wounding healeth. What the Poet's Fable concerning *Telephus* his Spear, is here truly verified: *Una eademque manus vulnus opemque tulit.* The same holy Hand that wounded us, must cure us. *Rom. 9. 16.* So then it is not of him that willet, or of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth Mercy. *2 Cor. 1. 4.* The Lord of all Comfort, who comforteth us in all our Tribulation. — Jesus Christ brings the Soul into saving Trouble, and then sheds abroad into the Heart the comforts of Sanctifying Grace: He is alway ready at hand, always good and kind to Man, but then especially when Man stands in most need of him; as all the Saints have found and testified. *Manasses* in Prison; *Hagar* in the Wilderness; *Daniel* in the Lions Den: and they in the fiery Furnace. *Job, David, Hezekiah*, in great distress and anguish of Spirit. When the Bottle is dipped under Water, he saveth it from drowning: The more grievous their Oppression, the more gracious hath been his Redemption.

And the reason hereof is good:

First, Because none else can do it: Not Men or Angels, much less the Gilded Toys of the World, or all that exterior Lustre which

which charmeth the Eyes of so many, esteemed by a troubled Mind but as a Cloud in painting, a petty vapour of Water, or as Chaff driven of the Wind. The *Jews* have a saying common among them, viz. *It is he that openeth our Heart in his Law, (i.e.)* By his Spirit he enableth the Heart to understand, and effect Spiritual things; it is a Branch of his Prerogative. Luke 24. 45. *He opened their Understandings*; by removing Impediments, by breathing into them the Holy Ghost, and bestowing further Functional Graces: As *S. Ambrose* expounds and explains that Text by some passages of *S. Paul*, 1 Cor. 12. 8, 9. God toucheth the Heart, as the Musician doth the strings of his Instrument, and it soundeth what he pleaseth.

Secondly, He hath Undertaken and Promised it; by *Himself* to our First Parents, and by his Prophets unto the Church in every Age successively. It is the sum and end of the New Covenant, to accept those who deny themselves; to raise up them that are cast down, to enrich those that are poor in Spirit, and to speak comfortably to those, who will not be comforted any other way. He brings them into this *Wilderness* for this end, that he may speak, and not speak in vain unto them. Till then, commonly Man is like an untamed Heifer, or wild Asses Colt, that runs and revels here and there, that breaks all Bonds, and will hear no Advice: When

Sin is discovered, and Conscience awakened, one syllable of the Gospel, one word of Comfort, is as good News out of a far Country. In every natural Man there is a three-fold Bar, hindering the entrance of Spiritual Light and Life; Ignorance in the understanding; it is covered with Ignorance, as the Deep was at first with Darknes, there is a very Chaos: Hardness in the Heart, like that of *Nabal's*, which became like a Stone; and a malicious pravity in the Will, which is like a poison Sepulchre; so that as such, he can neither understand, receive, nor affect this Supernatural Work, till the Lord hath removed them by his Spirit, Cooperating with the Law and Gospel. It is said of *Eydia*, that *the Lord opened her Heart*, i. e. effectually called her, as *Calvin* saith: He gave her Divine Light and Grace; without which special Concurrence of his, *Paul's* labour had been fruitless. In effect, it is all one with this, *I will speak unto her Heart*, (i. e.) I will speak friendly, Plainly, and Effectually. Conceive this Evangelical Work to go on in this Order:

First, The Lord revealeth himself to such a Heart, so dejected and troubled, as a Wise and Loving Father, not willing nor suffering any such, to perish: As *St. Ambrose* told *Maurice*, *Ecce tantarum lacrimarum, &c.* Son of so many Tears (as she shed for her *Augustine*) cannot perish. Now these brought

by a Voice into the *Wilderness*, are all Sons of Sorrow, many Tears are shed by them (as a living Fountain sends forth plentiful streams) and often many Tears are shed for them, therefore they cannot Perish. And thus the Lord doth in three degrees.

1. He makes it evident, that there is a possibility of Ease, Purity, and Peace: And to that end, he brings many precedents to their Mind, of old, hard, rusty Hearts, renewed, softened and opened: For they are recorded in Scriptures for that purpose. *Paul* first, he obtained Mercy for this cause, 1 Tim. 1. 16. For a pattern to them which should hereafter believe. The Lord speaks to some as bad as might be; compared to *Sodom* and *Gomorrah*, Isa. 1. 9. Yet in the 18. ver. there is, Come let us reason together, though your sins be as *Scarlet*, &c. Others are bespatter'd with idolatrous filthiness; yet, I will cleanse you from all your filthiness, is God's Promise, Ezek. 36. 25. Besides many others, with the Apostles black Roll, 1 Cor. 6. 10, 11. Such were some of you, but ye are washed and sanctified. These and the like Instances are here brought to mind, as evidences of Divine Favour, and encouragements to Faith.

2. He discovereth Christ, and acquaints them with the New-Covenant, as the only Remedy, to make up the breach of the first-conditions. Behold, saith the Lord, my Son, a Lamb slain from the beginning, to take away

the Sins of the World. Behold him in Union with your Nature, and in Union to the Office of Mediatorship. Behold him in his Obedience, Active and Passive, assuming the Crime and Curse of your Nature, undergoing the penalty, and fulfilling the Precept of the Law in his own Person, but in your stead and room. Behold him in his Meritorious Viatory Office, by way of Purchase and Conquest; as also in his Applicatory-Intercession for all burdened Souls; who seeing you are truly weary of Sin, *behold the Mediator* by a real tender of his own Merits, prevailing for you among the rest.

3. He offereth Christ unto all such, upon condition of Faith and Repentance, to the performance of which Condition he enableth in his Offer: So that they *will* to do, what they are required; saying often with grief and fear, O that we could Repent and Believe! O that we could take the Lord's offer! &c. Although Actual Faith be not yet in the Heart, as some are of Opinion [the *Mr. Perkins* judgeth the contrary], yet it is very near, and shall infallibly follow. *Hagar* had her Eyes opened to see the Well, before she went to it, and stooped down to take and taste it. Faith comes in by exercise, to manifest it self by certain steps and degrees. And let all those who find themselves past any of them, thankfully acknowledging God's Work, and be humbly constant in

in the use of Means, for the Lord will speak again : *Phil. 1. 6. He which hath begun a good Work in you, will perform it, &c.* And pray, as Luther wonted to do, *Confirm, O Lord, in what thou hast wrought, and perfect the Work that thou hast begun in us to thy Glory.* As Queen Elizabeth prayed, "Look upon the Wounds of thine Hands, and dispise not the Work of thine Hands; thou hast written me down in the Book of Preservation with thine own Hand, O read thine own Hand-writing, and save me !"

Secondly, He openeth the Heart towards himself, and that in three Degrees;

1. He persuadeth it of the truth of those Passages formerly revealed and discovered, and that the Lord doth seriously intend them to all in this condition.

2. He raiseth up in it an earnest longing after them, as the only good to be desired, with which they may be happy, and without them they must be everlastingly miserable. The wise Spiritual Merchant, having once found this Treasure, hideth it, and makes haste for joy that there is some possibility of enjoying it; he selleth all that he hath, and resolveth to purchase it, whatever he pay, whatever the conditions be. As the hunted Hart longs after the running Stream; so these Men do now cry out, *Give us Christ, or else we die !* They Hear, Reade, Fast, and Confer; O they will part with all, they will

(135)
do any thing for Christ: A Sight, a Touch, a Taste of him is more worth than the World.

3. After many Conflicts, Doubts, and Fears, the Heart is wrought upon, not only willing to receive Christ, for so it was before, but actually to cast it self upon Christ, to rest on him, and to resign it self wholly to his dispose: [O the sweet Repose which a fainting Soul finds in a Promise rightly applied, after a storm of Spiritual Trouble!] The Heart is ever with him, the Eye is alway upon him, and the Tongue is delighted often to mention him. Sweet Jesus, hast thou done and suffered so much for me? Was thy Heart pierced, was thy Head bowed, was thy Body nailed to the Cross for my Redemption? How unworthy am I, such a wretched Creature, such a rebellious Prodigal, such an impure lump of Sin, to hear of such Mercy, much more to taste thereof? But seeing it was thy great Love to do it, and thy Bounty to prevent me by offering it, 'tis my duty to receive it, with all readiness of Mind, and thankfulness of Heart: Tho thou should'st kill me, yet will I trust in thee; tho thou should'st after cast me into Hell, by me merited, yet would I come unto thee: Lo, Lord Jesus, lo, a dumb, deaf, and lame Leper before thee! if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean and whole; and if thou wilt not, (none else can do it) I resolve to sink at thy Feet, and if it were possible

possible, to perish in thine Arms.
 Thirdly, The Lord speaks again to this same Heart, thus far wrought upon [three times he spake unto Samuel, before he knew what and to whom to answer], and the end and effect of it is three-fold:

1. By the power of his Word, he turneth out the old Inhabitant, [for *intus existens prohibet alienum*] Satan, who did reign there by Sin, and brings another into possession, even Christ, by his Spirit and Graces.

2. He changeth the natural Disposition of the Heart, truly for Parts, though not perfectly for Degrees: There is no part but is bespangled with Grace. As Air in respect of Light, so is the Heart in respect of Grace; of a double he makes one single; a hard and stony Heart he *softeneth*; Understand not this of any Natural, Moral, or Legal yielding (all which are presupposed) but of an *Evangelical* softness; a tenderness following upon serious deliberation and consideration of God's infinite Love, Christ's bitter Sufferings, and the odious nature of Sin: And lastly, Of an impure, deceitful, hypocritical Heart, he makes an honest, clean, sincere Heart. *Ego non sum ego*; It is not what it was: Such power and healing Vertue there is in the Word of God.

3. By his Divine Breath and Power, this Marriage between Christ and the Soul is consummate, the Spiritual Bond apprehended,

and the Mystical Union manifested; as it followeth in this very Chapter; *I will betroth thee unto me for ever; yea, I will betroth thee unto me in Righteousness, Judgment, Loving-kindness, and in Mercies: (i. e.)* In him, in whom Mercy and Justice meet, and are reconciled; I will do it truly and firmly, so that all his Benefits shall be made over by way of Joynture or Dower; thy Poverty and Deformity shall be accounted his, his Riches and Beauty thine. This is that the Lord speaks to the Heart finally, for this he allured her into the *Wilderness*, that he might win her to himself; and thus is this Work finished.

The manner of Conversion, as for the present we apprehend it to be ordinary, thus far concluded, and briefly in the Heads only unfolded; we may for further satisfaction, light and benefit require.

Quest. First, *When is the Lord said to speak unto the Heart?*

Ans^r. I answer, 1. When he overcomes the natural hardness of the Heart, and begins to let out that Spiritual Impostume, or mass of Impurity, which lieth hid in every one by Nature. This is a Work to which neither Men or Angels are able to set their Hands. The Heart-maker is the only Heart-breaker; and he alone that knows the Heart can purifie or purge it. When Rocks are turn'd into streams of Water, and the Mountains

tains melt like Wax, and clods of Earth are made like Stars of Heaven, surely then God putteth forth his Power; then he speaketh to the Heart.

2. When he raiseth any comfort in distressed Minds, by closing with them in some promises of Pardon, or power over Sin: This is the Voice of God; for he only can prepare a *Door of Hope* in every *Valley of Trouble*, provide *Manna in the Wilderness*, Water in every dry Rock, and Light in every Dungeon. There is no precious Electuary for sick Souls, but by his Prescription and Administration.

3. When he answereth the desire of the Heart, against such and such a Sin, or in a timely supply of such a Grace, either in truth where it is not, or for degrees where it was in a little measure before. All Grace is originally from Heaven, it comes from above, James 3. 17. (i. e.) from God; the first and second, preventing and assisting. God bids the Soul to mortifie such a Lust, and the Soul complains, as *Jehoshaphat*, 2 Chron. 20. 12. *I have no might against this great Army*; then the Lord comes in with Auxiliary Forces, and his Grace hath been sufficient. God bids him to pray for such a Mercy, and he finds himself very unfit; his Heart at first was dead and flat, but on a sudden, he is carried above his own strength, his Tears drop, his Love flames: God hath then spoken,

ken, then he came in with assisting Grace. If the Heart burn in Prayer, God hath struck the Fire ; the Spirit hath been tuning the Heart, therefore it maketh sweet melody.

4. When there is a close concurrence, and an orderly subordination between God's Word and the Heart: When the Word is not only delivered to the Heart, but the Heart also is deliver'd up unto the Word, By the closing of these two, our Wills are wholly taken up in God's Will: So that the Heart ever saith after, as Christ did, *not my Will, in any thing, but thy Will be done in all*, O Lord! This is one reason alledged by St. *Augustin*, why he would have all sorts to reade the Scriptures, and frequently to hear them, *Quia in illis loquitur Deus ad Cor indoctorum atque doctorem*: Because therein God speaks unto the Heart of the Learned and Unlearned. [*Aug. Epist. 3. ad Volus.*]

Quest. Secondly, It may be further demanded, *How a Man may know, when and whether the Lord hath, or doth speak unto his Heart?*

Ans. First, By an awful dread, which fills the Heart when God hath spoken unto it. *Josiah* trembled at the Voice of God in his Law: And that is a testimony of God's speaking to him. But thus it is with every Creature that hears the Voice of God; *the Devils tremble*, and *Men quake*; and as the *Worms* when it thundreth, wriggle into the corners

of

of the Earth: so for all their lofty looks, though when all is quiet, they may puff up themselves with a conceit they are more then ordinary; like *Caligula*, who thought himself a God, imitating *Joves* Thunder: But when the True God gave forth his Voice from Heaven, he that before was so high, was now as low in spirit, running under his Bed, or into any Bench-hole for preservation. So let the Lord but arise to speak, the tallest Cedar, the highest Tower, the loftiest Spirit of Godless Men can dare it no longer, but will think the holes of the Rocks, and Caves of the Earth, to be their best shelter. Yea, even the inanimate Creatures shew the impressions of his powerful Voice. The Sea flies, the Mountains skip, the Earth trembleth, and the whole Creation shaketh at the Voice of God. Therefore,

Secondly, It may be known by love and longing after him. As it was with *Elisha*, after *Elijah* had saluted him, he was presently inflamed, as if a spark of Fire had fallen down upon him, so that he would unseparably follow him. Thou, O my Soul, art *Elisha*, God is *Elijah*; if he once speak unto thee, thou wilt follow him crying, *My Lord, and my God! O lift up the light of thy Countenance upon me! When shall I come and appear before the presence of God? All the days of my appointed time will I wait.* Such drawing Vertue is in the Word of Christ; it is as
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an Ointment poured forth, therefore the Virgins love him. Love is the Whet-stone of Love; and the Love of Christ in speaking to his People, constraineth them to love him, 2 Cor. 5. 14.

Thirdly, By those Evangelical Effects formerly mentioned. When God speaks unto a poor grieved Heart, as the Father unto his Prodigal Son, Luke 15. 20, &c. The Heart is raised to admire God in all his Attributes and Ways, and is ravish'd with desire of his Glory. *What shall I render, for so much undeserved favour? I will take the Cup of Salvation, and call upon the Name of the Lord! I will dwell in the House of the Lord, to behold the fair Beauty of the Lord for ever.*

Fourthly, By that speedy reply which the Heart returns unto God, *Speak on Lord, for thy Servant heareth, and thy Face will I seek,* Psal. 27. 8. The Heart doth eccho out as it were an answer to the Voice of God; as Jer. 3. 22. the Lord speaks, *Return ye Backsliding Children, and I will heal your Backslidings*: They readily answer, *Behold, we come unto thee, for thou art our God!* Every gracious Person hath the duplicate of God's Law in his Heart, and is willingly cast into the mould of his Word. When Men have their Ears only spoken unto in it, at the best they do but dwell on Duties, and place the sum of their Religion in a bare outward profession; but when God hath once spoken unto the Heart,

Heart, then they look more into the substance of Religion.

Quest. Thirdly, If it be demanded, *What a Man should do, when the Lord hath, or doth speak unto the Heart?*

Ans^r. I answer; With all readiness and humble reverence the Heart must speak unto the Lord again. So much is expected, and good Manners will teach a Man so much; to speak when he is spoken unto, especially by such a Superiour. Now, the language of the Heart consists in two things, viz. Receiving, and Returning: In *receiving* what the Lord offers, by a flexible yielding unto the Work and Word of God; and by a concurrence both of *consent* in respect of his *Promises*, and of *obedience* in regard of his *Commands*. In *returning*, Praise, Prayer, and all hearty service: *Praise*, for that God is pleased to take notice of you, so mean, so vile. Great Men are thought to grace their Inferiours, if they vouchsafe to speak unto them; I am sure it is so here; by speaking to us, the Lord doth exceedingly honour us: *μεγίστη τῷ θεῷ ἡ συγκατάβασις*, saith *Chrysostom*, God's condescension is incomparable; he speaks to his People, as a Man would speak to his Friend; thus he graceth them inwardly, outwardly, and so maketh them gracious and amiable in the Eyes of Men. Prayer, that as he hath begun, so he would finish the Work, till the Heart be thoroughly moulded

moulded into a spiritual temper of Flexibility and Purity, according to his own Heart.

Use 1. From hence the Erroneous Opinions, and Irregular Practices of all those are justly to be taxed and reprov'd ;

First, Who ascribe this Work either to inward power and strength of nature, or to some outward means, as if *Man* could speak unto the Heart, or the matter of a Sacrament did contain to convey Grace by the work wrought. *Pelagians*, old and new, go the first way ; *Papists*, with their followers, the latter way : Both joyning to derogate from the glory of his Grace, who ascribeth this work unto himself ; *I will speak unto the Heart.* These Men do undertake to sail without the Stars, and labour without the Sun : They set *Dagon* before the *Ark*, equalize the Creature with the Creator. If this were true, then *St. Paul* mistook to say, *Not I, but the Grace of God in me* ; and, it is *God that giveth the increase.* *Gratia non est gratia illo modo, nisi sit gratuita omni modo*, is *St. Austins* rule. Let them with their Wit and Learning, endeavour to set up the Idol of *Free-will*, and strength of Nature ; let us with the sacred Scriptures, labour to set up the *Free-Grace* of God, who *worketh in us both to will and to do, of his own good Pleasure.*

Secondly, Who being in the *Wilderness* of
Spi-

Spiritual Distress, will not stay till the Lord speak unto them, but make haste to drink Water out of any Puddle, to snap up Carnal Ease, from Worldly Jollity, in Eating, Drinking, Gaming, and other Pastimes, to drive away such Melancholy Dumps: Some by busie Employments, as *Cain* thought to do: Others by Musick, as *Saul*; a third sort by variety of Flesh-pleasing-Company: [Being herein not much unlike to many weak and crasie Patients, that are ready to fancy any new Medicine they hear of, and to tamper with that, rather than to expect a Recovery, through a course of Physick prescribed by the Physician]: All which, you may be sure, will say as the *Scribes* and *Pharisees* did to *Judas*, *What is that to us, see thou to it*: Either they will cast you off desperately; saying, Now you are mad, this you have got by reading and hearing so many Sermons; or else, they will slight it with *Gallio*, and care for none of these things: Or at least they will quench all [a killing pity too common], by daubing with untempered Mortar: So that one day you will say out of woful experience, *Miserable Comforters are ye all, Physicians of no value*, good for nothing. Seek not to them, rest not on them, it is God only in and through Christ, who speaks peace unto his Saints; in this case, hear only what he saith.

Thirdly, A third sort to be blamed are such,

such, as are converted outwardly in Profession only, [the Lord make them sound!] *Pictures without Life, Clouds without Water, Sodoms Apples*, fair only to see to: The *outward Man* is spoken unto, and convinced so far as to perform Duties; the *Ear* is spoken unto so far as to hear often; the *Tongue* is spoken unto so far as to discourse well; but the *Heart* is not spoken unto; all the devotion of these Men is in Hearing and Censuring, they come to arraign the Minister at the Bar of their own Judgment, and to judge that Word, by which they must be judged at the last Day; they come to debate the *Man*, not the *Doctrine*, to censure the Preacher, not to practise the Sermon: Like Merchant's Coopers, they taste much Wine, but deal for none; their Hearts are not changed; the same Lusts lodge there as before, restrained only; they are hard and impure as ever; the virtue of Christ's Death and Life is not yet applied to such, they are yet destitute of Grace, whatever their profession be: Nay, you and your Profession are but like the *curst Fig-tree*, that bare Leaves and no Fruit. God hath not spoken to your Hearts, neither did you ever speak in your Hearts to God. Many Prayers you may haply say over, and yet never pray; for *Prayer* is an offering up of the *Heart*, or Will to God by Christ.

Use 2. The second Use will direct to Duty, which concerneth either Minister or People. *Ministers* must learn to speak unto the Heart, as near as possible they can; because God doth so, whose Ambassadors they are. Like *Marks-men*, though they cannot shoot so as to strike, yet they must aim at this Mark, their Arrows must be sharpened for this purpose; though like the Arrows of *Jonathan*, some fall short of, others go besides the Mark, yet some or other being guided by a Supreme Power, may pierce the *Hearts of the King's Enemies*, whereby the People shall fall under him. Those Ministers speak best, who strive to profit more than to please; and so must all they that desire to do good in that relation, they must preach to the Conscience, to the Quick: As King *James* of famous Memory, said of a Reverend Bishop of this Land, *This Man Preaches as if Death were at my Back*: So should every Minister do: Preach as if Death, Judgment, and Hell, were even at Mens Backs: Bring the point as near as may be, home to the hearers Door; that is, plainly, particularly, earnestly; otherwise, they preach as a Man that shoots his Arrows at random, and hits not the Mark; it is as if the Minister should lay his Sermon on his Cushion, and never dart it into the Peoples Bosoms. If People do not feel your Points at their Backs, Spears in their Sides, and Swords in their Bellies, they will

feel nothing, it will be lost labour. You that are *People* and *Hearers*, may learn,

1. To bring your *Hearts* with you to God's Ordinances: [How many heartless Sermons have some heard and made!] Else you bring nothing for God to speak unto; and it is no more than if you sent your Clothes stuf with Straw: Yea, upon the matter you deny his Presence and Office. Men that are his Messengers speak unto the Ears, and present things from their Lord unto the Eyes of the Body, and those parts you leave not at Home; for what should we do at Church (you will say) without our Ears and Eyes? But I say, What make you there without your *Hearts*? God is there who speaks unto the *Heart*, as Men unto the *Ear*: If *that* be away, it is all one as if you were absent: Nay, you aggravate your Sin, and provoke him more by your heartless presence; in preferring Men, whom you vouchsafe to hear, unto God, whom you will not hear; but highly dishonour him, by offering a dead Carcass in his Temple, an unreasonable service, in such cold Devotion: All such are Abominable; they put a Cheat upon God, and mock the most High: They come full Mouth'd, but empty Hearted; offer a Case without the Jewel, a Gilded Cup and no Wine in it. To such God will say, *Who required these things at your hands, that to tread my Courts? My Sons, give me your Hearts,*

Hearts, or you give me nothing : As *Joseph* said to his Brethren concerning *Benjamin*, Gen. 43. 3. so God saith of the Heart, *Te shall not see my Face without it.* Bring your Family and Bibles to Church, but especially your **Hearts**, which are most out of order, and there the Lord will begin his Work. Joyn with the Congregation Hand and Heart, offer them both to God in earnest Prayer, and attentive Hearing ; wait and say, When Lord, *how long, Holy, and True !* Accept what thou callest for, and speak one word to my poor **Heart** among the rest, before I go, that the Bones which thou hast broken, may rejoyce.

2. To labour most about the **Heart** ; the Heart in the Body, and the heart of Religion ; yea, and to prize good Men [who by their good Fruits, testify to others the goodness of their Hearts, as the good Fruit doth the good Tree] ; because the Lord hath spoken to them. No Relick comparable, no image can be a more lively remembrancer. If *David* did so admire *Man* as *Man*, how then ought we to admire and reverence *Man* as united to Christ, shining with his Image, adorn'd with his Beams, clothed with his Righteousness, and entitled to an everlasting Kingdom. Many as Beautiful, some as rich in Apparel, are very powerful to draw and dazzle the Eyes of weak Beholders ; but for Beauty and Honour, none are comparable to gracious Hearts ; they now partake of

Angelical Splendor, and hereafter shall exceed the Sun in brightness, [*Acts 6. ult. Mat. 13. 43. Phil. 3. ult.*]. But, *Who is sufficient for these things?* sufficiently qualified to set forth to the Life, the Beauty and Brightness of Christ mystical? He had need of a refined Nature, of sublimated Thoughts, of a Quill taken from the Wing of a Seraphin, and to soar aloft, free from the pressure of terrene mixtures, in heavenly Contemplation. Who can reade, or seriously think of this mystery of Mercy, without a readier expression of joy mixt with tears, than their conceits in words? What a Man, a sinful Man, weltering in Blood, full of Sores and Ulcers, fitter to be loathed than loved; for such a one, Poor, Blind, Miserable, and Naked, to be married to a Prince, such a Prince, the Heir of Heaven and Earth? *Who can believe our report?* or believing it, not love such an one? *To whom will the Arm of the Lord reveal this,* but to humbled Souls, that are meanest in their own apprehensions? Such shall *understand* this secret, and partake in it, to *sit on Thrones* as crowned Kings and Queens for evermore!

Use 3. Lastly, What transcending Comfort doth this Truth and Text afford to all troubled Minds? Such I mean as have been stayed by Divine Power when they were running towards Hell, in all sorts of Vanity and

and Prodigality, and had been there ere this had not God in Christ been more merciful to them, than they were careful about their own safety. If the King should vouchsafe to speak to a mean Person before many, what an honour would it be? what ravishing thoughts would arise, and what applause would it procure? How much more should it be so here, when *the King of Kings* speaks, and that unto the Heart of a forlorn Creature, comfortably? *I have heard thy Prayer, I have seen thy Tears; behold, I will heal thee, &c.* so the Lord spake unto the Heart of Hezekiah, 2 Kings 20. 5. *Thy Prayers and thine Alms, are come up for a memorial before God, &c.* so the Lord spake unto the Heart of Cornelius, Acts 10. 4. And how often did our blessed Lord, and compassionate Saviour Jesus Christ, raise up disconsolate Souls with such words as these; *Son, be of good cheer, thy Sins be forgiven thee. Daughter, great is thy Faith, go in peace, thy Faith hath made thee whole.* Yea, all the precious Promises are such Cordials. See Prov. 28. 13. *Who so confesseth and forsaketh his Sins, shall find Mercy.* Job 33. 27, 28. *He looketh upon Man, and if any say I have sinned and perverted that which is right, and it profiteth me not; he will deliver his Soul from going into the Pit, &c.* Isa. 1. 18. *Come now, let us reason together, saith the Lord; though your Sins be as Scarlet, they shall be as white as Snow, &c.*

Chap. 55. ver. 7. Let the Wicked forsake his way, and the Righteous Man his thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have Mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon. Mich. 7. 19. He will turn again, he will have compassion upon us; he will subdue our Iniquities, and cast all their Sins into the bottom of the Sea. Hos. 14. 4, 5. I will heal their Back-slidings, I will love them freely. Mal. 4. 2. To them that fear my Name, shall the Son of Righteousness arise with healing in his Wings. Mat. 11. 28. Come unto me all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Rom. 8. 1. Now therefore there is no Condemnation to them that are in Christ, &c. 1 John 1. 9. Rev. 21. 6. So almost in every Book of that holy Volume, may be found such Stars of Light, such pieces of Treasure, such Bezar-stones, to keep sick Souls from fainting under their Sins and Sorrows; Promises, wherein the Lord speaks something to the Hearts of believing Penitents to this effect; *The Seed of the Woman shall bruise the Serpent's Head.* Whatsoever Christ did or suffered, was for you; by his satisfaction God is reconciled to you, all your Sins are pardoned, and your Souls shall be saved. This is to speak to the Heart of a poor Sinner. Now as some Artificers after long poring upon a piece of Black Work, and finding a dimness in their Eyes, are wont to refresh themselves with the beholding the Verdure of

of Meadows, or lustre of Emeralds; so let poor Penitents, wearied and heavy laden with the consideration of their Sins, for their refreshment make use of those Gospel-Cordials, the Promises; they will be cheering to the Eye of Faith.

But 'tis sufficiently known, that those to whom this Comfort belongs, are most ready to put it from them, as none of their Portion. The troubled Spirit makes Darts of every thing it can, to fight against Reason, and kill it self, not suspecting its own Poyson. The conclusion therefore of this subject shall endeavour to prevent that mischief, by proposing and answering some Cases, which may contain the complaints of such troubled Spirits.

Object. 1. My Sins have been so many and great, that I fear to apply any Promise.

Answer. Nay, therefore you should be the more ready and willing to apply this; Lord, come unto me, for I am a sinful Man, and have most need of help! Save me, Lord, or I perish! Greater Sins should hasten all to the Mercy Seat; the greater Wounds to the Physician. [No Man flies his Counsel because his Cause is great and intricate, but plies him the more]. Especially while you consider the extent of his Power and Love who speaketh. His Power passeth the nature and number of your Sins whatever they be. Christ is a great Saviour, He is called a

Mighty Saviour, and the Salvation in him is called *Great Salvation*, and the Redemption in him *Great Redemption*. 1 John 2. 1. *If any Man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous.* And for his Love, that extends to all sorts of Penitents; to *Manasses*, *Mary Magdalen*; to the *Romans* and *Corinthians*; to foul Sinners, griping Oppressors, sharp Persecutors, Sinners in the highest form. 1 John 2. 2. *And he is the Propitiation for our Sins, &c.* In the *Levitical Law*, there were Sacrifices for all sorts of Sins; and what did they prefigure, but the ample efficacy in Christ's Death, which was an Atonement for Sins of all kinds; and was as the daily Sacrifice, for the Expiation of the continued and augmented number of Transgressions. Even where *Sin hath abounded*, there *Grace hath after much more abounded*. So if you consider the nature of those Promises made unto distressed Souls, both for *Constitution* and *Condition*: For *Constitution*, they are absolutely free; no Foreign Power to enforce them from him that made them, nor any Natural Abilities in Man to reserve them: And for *Condition*, they are *Evangelical*, bringing with them what they require of you. Be of good comfort when he calleth you; fear not, refuse not to receive what he offereth: Say rather, *Speak Lord, and speak home*, for thy Servant desireth to hear.

Object.

Object. 2. But alas, it is pleaded, my Corruptions have been and are strong, and abominable, that I know not what to do.

Ans. The sense of Sin's strength, is no hopeful symptom, nor prejudice to Faith. Of all tempers, the hardned is most dangerous; and Sin hath the greatest strength, where there is the least sense. When a Patient is deadly sick, he saith, and thinks he is well, and feels no pain; but when he is recovering, he is full of sense, and complains his Head is weak, his Stomach sick, his Bones ache, all is amiss, every thing is too hard for him. There is more hope of one sensible sinner, than of a thousand presumptuous hardned Wretches. Sense of Sin doth ever precede sense of Christ. Besides, the power of God's Voice will weaken them, and the Efficacy of his Spirit, mortifie and subdue them. Here it may be said, as it was of the Serpent, a little before it was taken, *Mortuum bestiarum violentiores esse morsus*; dying Serpents bite most cruelly, dying Sins trouble and oppose the Soul most stoutly. Sanctification follows Faith, and presupposeth our Union to Christ. You may not stand safely on this pretence, that you will labour to get more power over your Corruptions, and then you will hearken to what God will speak into your Hearts; but first hearken, and Victory will follow by degrees, and that necessarily upon this ground, viz. The Principle

ple whence Grace cometh, the Stock out of which this fair Flower groweth, is stronger than the Principle, and Root, whence Corruption, that stinking Weed, floweth; being joyned, the weaker must yield in the end. Only do you resist it and complain often about it in private prayer to Christ, and be assur'd, that he who hath broken the *Serpent's Head* for you, will also *bruise* it in you.

Object. 3. *Oh but Satan and my own Heart do condemn, and tell me I am a Cast-away!*

Ans. In this case hearken not what Men or Angels say, much less what Satan and your own deceitful Hearts suggest; but what the Lord saith: It is his Prerogative to *speak unto the Heart*, and your duty to hear him only; before your selves, much more before Satan. Suppose the Devil should tell you that all were well, your Sins pardoned, and that you should be saved, would you believe him for himself? I trow not: And for your selves you are no competent Judges in this perplexed condition; as the distemper'd Palace is not fit to judg of Meats, or the vitiated eye of an Object: Consult with experienced Christians, and still keep an Ear open for this Voice of God, speaking at all hours of the Day; *I will hearken what the Lord will say, for he speaketh peace to his People.* But withal, let not his *Saints return to folly.*

Object. 4. *Me-thinks I behold God, not as speaking to my Heart, but as still frowning upon me,*

out of, and speaking against me, as a Judge for the
 onger of his Laws; and after the use of much
 Corruptions in private and publick, I can feel no
 being comfort.

end. *Ans.* This is a fore scruple, which vehem-
 ten gently beats upon most sensible Sinners;
 and more need therefore to assail it. The an-
 swer is this, You must learn to live and walk
 by Faith, and not so much by Sense, to be-
 lieve more than you feel. Your comfort is
 ! more in Promises than in Possession. Al-
 though the Fig-tree should not blossom, neither
 fruit be on the Vine; though the labour of the
 sower should fail, and the Fields should yield no
 increase, &c. Yet (saith the Prophet by Faith)
 I would I rejoyce in the Lord, and joy in the God
 of my salvation; who is my strength, and
 will make my feet like Hinds feet, and make
 me to walk upon my high places. Even
 with Abraham, beyond hope to believe under
 his own hope; so shall you bring much Glory to
 God.

Palat. Now to help forward this Spiritual Appre-
 hension and Resolution,

1. Labour to have your Judgments rightly
 inform'd in the manner of Divine Dispensa-
 tions of Grace, what Method and Degrees
 the Holy Spirit observeth in Converting and
 Sanctifying the Heart. Ignorance of this is
 followed with great heaviness, and much
 fruitless discomfort, of long continuance.

2. Look off your selves, and beyond all
 means

means [which are as Guides and Conduits; *Guides* to lead you to Christ, and *Conduits* to convey Virtue from him unto your Hearts]: Dwell not on the well-doing of Duties, rest not on the exercise of Grace; there is no satisfying Merit, no purifying Blood, in all, or any of these; that so you may look upon the *Mediator* only [all our Riches and Safety is from without, from this blessed Object, conveyed and received by Faith] and through him upon the *Father*. It is horrible to think on God, and terrible to hear him, much more to see him without Christ: Guilt dare not look on Majesty, and Majesty is most terrible in an Enemy and a Judg. I have read of a politick Practice of a *Macedonian* Courtier, who being banisht King *Philip's* presence, adventured once again to come into the Court, and further, into the King's presence, with young *Alexander* in his Arms; as if he said, *Let him plead for me*; and accordingly for his Wit, he was pardon'd and accepted into Favour. Change the Persons, and you may make it a President. True it is, you are deservedly banisht Heaven, and God frowneth upon you; but come with Christ in your Arms, make him your Friend; and then no doubt of acceptance; *He hath made us accepted in the Beloved*. In Christ he is a reconciled God, a tender Father in Jesus Christ; in Christ God's Nature is lovely to us, and our Persons lovely to God.

3. Meditate often, what it is you have in
and with Christ, *viz.* Perfect Righteousness,
imputed to Justification, and imparted to San-
ctification. All your Sins remitted freely,
your Persons accepted to Eternal Life. So
that Men nor Devils, *the Gates of Hell* shall
not finally prevail against you, either active-
ly to hurt or hinder, or passively to withstand
you.

Object. 5. *But I find my Heart hard and
impure, therefore I fear God hath not spoken
to it.*

Ans^r. To find this, and in truth to be-
wail it, is one sign of God's speaking to it.
God in the still Voice hath discovered that
unto you, which undiscover'd, might have
proved your Bane. [The Scum appears not,
ill forced by the heat of the Fire ; the impu-
rity of the Heart would lie undiscern'd were
it not for the Fire of God's Word]. Live
not under the reign of any one Sin ; pray for
more Sanctity and Softness, [remembering
those two precious Promises, *viz.* Deut. 30. 6.
*And the Lord thy God will circumcise thine
Heart, — to love the Lord — .* Ezek. 36.
25, 26. *Then will I sprinkle clean Water upon
you, and you shall be clean, &c.* Wherein
God speaks again to perfect what he hath
begun], and for more Spiritual enlarge-
ment ; to be more thankful for this, that the
Lord hath vouchsafed to single you out above
many others, to allure you into this *Wilderness*,
and

and to speak unto you : be sure God's Words and Works shall not be left imperfect. Upon the falling of your Eyes towards the Earth in token of Humility, let your Hearts be raised towards Heaven, to testify your Spiritual Joy; by saying with Mephibosheth, *What is thy Servant, that thou should'st look upon such a dead Dog as I am?* With Abigail, *Behold, let thy Hand-maid be a Servant, to wash the feet of the Servants of my Lord.* With Ruth, *Why have I found Grace in thine Eyes, that thou shouldest take notice of me, seeing I am a Stranger?* And with Jesus Christ, *I thank thee, O Father, Lord of Heaven and Earth, that thou hast hid these things from the Wise and Prudent, and hast revealed them unto Babes; even so, O Father, because it was thy good pleasure!*

Quest. After all this, how may a Man know the truth and soundness of his Conversion?

Ans. To this, the following Discourse will offer some resolution; for which purpose it is designedly adjoyned. Reade and reap Profit! Give Glory to God by Jesus Christ.

In the Mount will the Lord be seen.

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A
CANAAN
OF
COMFORT;

DISCOVERING

That a true fight of Sin
is an infallible sign of
Grace:

from that Expression of Holy and
Penitent *David*,

Psal. 51. 3.

—*My Sin is ever before me.*

By W. C.

London, Printed in the Year, 1679.

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A Consolatory Preface to poor
Christians, dejected under the
sense of their Sins.

GOD's Ministers are commanded by the
Voice of that Evangelical Prophet
Isaiah, to comfort, to speak to the Lord's
People, to comfort Jerusalem, and cry un-
to her, that her Warfare is accomplished,
and that her Iniquity is pardoned. In
obedience to this Command, I have pre-
sumed to publish this Word in season, for
your Benefit, in the following plain Dis-
course; and the plainer, because such a
dress doth best become Divinity. Affected
terms may please the Fancy, but will ne-
ver feed the Understanding; they Court,
but not Comfort. In these Points, Ex-
perience is more than Reading. Both
ways (all praise be to the Author of
Grace!) you have learn'd how the Lord
by degrees, allureth and draws Men and
Women, out of the pleasing Fields of Pro-
digality, into the Wilderness of Spiritual
L Trouble,

The P R E F A C E.

Trouble, that he might there speak unto their Hearts, and work them to a gracious Temper; wherein afterwards he keeps them, partly by presenting Sin to the Eye and Conscience, as he did to David: Which you must know is not to sink, nor drive them to Despair, but to nourish and increase in them, an hatred of Sin, and a longing love after Christ; seeing the one daily, to loath it; and feeling the want of the other, more to desire him. It was an excellent Speech of that eminent Martyr, Mr. Lambert, who lifting up his Hands flaming with Fire (as his Heart did with Love and Zeal) cried aloud to the People out of the Fire,

Christ, and none but Christ.
Which I designedly put you in mind of, and commend to you, whereby to encourage you in your dejected Condition, and to propound as a pattern for your Practice: For an adequate object of Faith, to accept and rest upon as the only Mediator of Justification and Salvation, Christ, and none but Christ: In the exercise of Repentance for a term to which we must trust, and by whom we have access to the Father, Christ, and none but Christ:
In

The PREFACE.

unto the duty of Prayer, for an Intercessor
to give weight and worth unto them, Christ,
and none but Christ: For a compleat
Saviour, both to redeem by Purchase
and Conquest, in regard of Man's two-
fold Bondage, and to adorn the Soul with
Righteousness, Christ, and none but
Christ. As Sin is, so let Christ be ever
before you; in his Incarnation, Death,
Resurrection, Ascension, and Intercessi-
on: In his Natures and Offices; in the
excellency of his Merit and Efficacy of
his Spirit; in his Beauty and Innocen-
cy, in his Power and Pity; in his
hidden Treasure and Riches unsearch-
able; believe it, there is no such Image
to look upon, no such Picture to pray
before, as the Promises present in him
to every believing Eye; in your Chamber,
and at Church, Alone and in Company,
in Health and Sickness, in Life and
Death, look upon him, love him and say,

Christ, and none but Christ.

Then may you be assured, that God
hath brought you the best way out of Egypt
unto Canaan, that he hath spoken unto your
Heart indeed, and that Christ's Blood is,
and shall be effectually applied, to put Sin

The PREFACE.

both out of Affection and Memory; and in due time, to cleanse your Nature from the power and being of Sin. In a word, be of good Courage, keep on in your way, your Labour will not be in vain in the Lord. Heaven, or rather Christ, will pay for all. If then you would have Sin pardon'd; Hardness and Dulness removed, Grace bestowed, in the Habit, Acts, or Degrees, Doubts answered, Weakness strengthened; Prayers and Tears with Christ will do it: Children of many Tears cannot perish.

Farewel.

A

Canaan of Comfort,

DISCOVERING

That a true sight of Sin, is an infal-
lible sign of Grace.

Psal. 51. 3.

—My Sin is ever before me.

OF Books, the Scripture, of Scripture, the
Psalms, of Psalms, the Penitentials, of
Penitentials, this hath worthily
obtained the place of Eminen-
cy, and for Use and Comfort,
[were it meet to compare
things, which are in their own nature Super-
lative.] of Super-excellency in the Church
of God: And that justly, whether we re-
gard the Author, the Occasion, the Subject,
or the End of it. The Author was David,
a King, a Prophet, a Penitent Sinner; every

Basil. Hom.
12 in Psal.

L 3

way

way great; great in his Gifts, great in his Person and Place, and greatly Beloved: great in his Fall, and great in his Recovery; and all to draw transgressing Greatness unto imitation; either by Watchfulness to prevent, or by Penitency, to recover themselves out of Satan's snares. The Occasion, was his too too-long departure from God, in that great and presumptuous Sin against the Lord, in the matter of Uriah, being at the Leaguer of Rabbah; David violated the Chastity of Bathsheba his Wife, [

Ocium est principium male faciendi. Basil. Hex.

whosoever dareth the Devil by Idleness, shall surely be tempted by him to some forbidden Employment.]

She conceived; he labours to hide it, as fast as she by growth did discover it; by sending for Uriah home, that so he might be deem'd the Father of that Adulterous Issue: This not succeeding [altho he had added the strength of Wine to his command, to make him at once forgetful and inordinate,] he gives way to another bloody Project: For commonly, Sin goeth not without company (being like the Sea, the end of one Wave is the beginning of another; or like the Circles in a Pond, one begets another: And as in a case of Stairs, one is a step to another; so every Sin is a Stair to help up to higher and worse Sins). And that was to send him back with Letters drawn by David's Pen, to the General Joab, that

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that he might under some Warlike Adventure, place him in the way of Death; so to free *David*, as he deceitfully thought, both from *Uriah's* presence, and his Blood, while he was taken out of the way by the Sword of the Children of *Ammon*; *Not I, but they have done it.* Which being done, *David* married *Bathsheba*, thinking that way to cloak his Sin, and so all was hush and quiet on *David's* side: But the Thunder-clap is yet behind; *The thing that David had done, displeased the Lord.* God loved *David*, and therefore hated his Sin, and would not suffer it by concealment (like a dangerous Sore) to fester; but sends *Nathan* to take away the evil that blinded him, and to allure him by a borrowed speech into the *Wilderness*, that there he might *Speak unto his Heart*; to open what Sin had shut, to cleanse what Sin had defiled, to soften what Sin had hardened, and to bring him to some satisfaction, and that by way of publick Confession, and as it were to do open Penance in a white Sheet.

The *Subject* is an expression of Evangelical Sorrow, or the language of a melting Heart, breathing out a compassionate Lamentation, after Pardon desired, obtained, and sealed. The cause of fear was past, *Nathan* had declaratively removed it upon his acknowledgment; *The Lord hath put away thy Sin, thou shalt not die.* God had put away

his Sin from before him, because he loved *David*; but *David* could not forget his Sin, because he loved the Lord. Love maketh God forget it, and the Sinner to remember it: *David's* love to God, so freely forgiving such hainous Sins, did increase daily, and with this love his sorrow grew, that he should so ill requite the Lord; the thought of it carried him more and more into God's Presence, whose Purity and Brightness meeting with the light of *David's* Conscience, represented his Sin more clearly, *as ever before him.*

When he considered what God had done for him, and what he had now done against the Lord, moving common Enemies to blaspheme, he was even ashamed and confounded, so Planet-struck he was, that he

*Tacta sudant
præcordia culpi.
Juven.*

could not, durst not lift up his Face, he is at the Meridian, Zenith, Vertical Point of Shame, he could not mount higher. The *End*, why it was penn'd and published was, partly in respect of *himself*, to get further assurance of God's re-promised Favour in his own apprehension; and partly, with reference to others, to leave a ground of *encouragement* for poor Souls that fall after Baptism (against that Spirit-quenching Doctrine of the *Novatians*, who leave no room for pardon of Sin after Baptism) or *Repentance*, to assure them it is possible they may be forgiven and received into Favour;

as

also, to leave a pattern of Penitency to all
 posterity: After grievous falls, even into
 presumptuous Sins, it is possible Men may
 be raised, return'd, and entertain'd; but it
 must be done thus, after the pattern shewed
 in this *Mount*; such Sins will be ever be-
 fore them, in Memory and Detestation, and
 the burden will be intollerable; so that they
 will often cry out with *David*, *My Sins are*
ever before me!

The meaning may be thus unfolded; as
David had said, and enlarged himself after
 this manner:

First, I am mindful of my Fault, as if it
 were written upon every Wall; God hath
 forgiven the *Guilt*, that it should not redound
 to *Condemnation*: but my Conscience cannot
 let go the *Memory* of that I have done; in
 the Day-time I think of it, and in the Night
 I dream of it; as my Book it is when I reade,
 and as an Image when I pray, (*ever before*
me); while I am alone, it doth accompany
 me, and when I am in Company, the thought
 of it doth not forsake me: Whither-soever
 I go, that woful Story is still presented with
 all the aggravating Circumstances: *Bathsheba*
defiled, *Uriah* slain, a harmless Sacrifice, and
 both by *David*; a Man called from the Sheep-
 hook to the Scepter, raised to highest Dig-
 nity out of deep Obscurity, and honoured
 with such a Style, as never any Man had:
 Oh Ingratitude! Shall not all Men in all

Ages, cry out upon *David*, that he should so far forget God, as to leave his own, many of his own, and to take his poor Neighbour's Lamb to dress for his Stranger? Oh fearful These or the like are my thoughts by Day, and no other are my conceits by Night; in Company I am alone, and while I am alone, I have these Companions, *My Sins are ever before me!*

Secondly, I am wonderfully troubled about it. For me-thinks mine Eyes and Ears have no other Object; I see my Sins in that order as they were acted; *Idleness* first, but followed with *Adultery*, first of the Eye, next of the Mind, and lastly of the Body; *Adultery* is attended by Drunkenness-active (*he made Uriah drunk*) and that Drunkenness by Murther. See the Bead-roll, viz. *Idleness*, *Adultery*, *Drunkenness*, and *Murther*, and hearken to the cry of them, one answering another, but all are against *David*; one was occasioned by another, and the former still punished in the latter: Many and fearful they are, more hideous than Hell, pursuing me like so many Furies into every place, as, of the whole Army, accusing me of Negligence and Security; of *Bathsheba*, bewailing the stain of her own Body, and her Husband's Bed; of *Uriah's* Blood calling from the Ground for vengeance; of all my Subjects, brought in danger by their Prince's Folly; yea, of all the Birds in the Air, whistling
David's

David's Crime on every Tree; of Heaven and Earth, groaning under the burden of such a Report, That *David*, a Man after God's own Heart, so beloved and advanced, should be thus foully overtaken; and lastly, of Jesus Christ, shewing his Wounds rub'd up afresh by these Abominations of mine: What Ear can endure, or Heart hold to see and hear his Sins thus set in order before him?

Thirdly, I am horribly afraid, not so much of Damnation (God hath graciously put away my Sin, I know I shall not die) as of the ugly face of Sin; at first it was not apprehended by me, (I little thought of what I now feel) but now it is presented to me in true Colours, black as Hell, bitter as Gall, and more heavy than Mountains; the pleasure was small and past, but the bitterness is present, and doth far exceed; it was momentary that delighted me, but lasting that vexeth me: I am ashamed of every passage, that I, knowing so much, and professing the contrary, should be so foolish and forgetful; first, to perpetrate the Act, then to cover it with Fig leaves; as if any Person, Thing, or Act, could be hid by any means from this bright Eye of the Word? Well may God be hid from me, but I can never be hid from God; *All things are naked and open to him.* Sin deceiveth most when it promiseth most, and bringeth a Curse with its sweetest morsels.

Aurum Tholosanum.

fels; being like that Gold which ever brought destruction to the Owners of it. Or

like that Horse which had all perfections that could be named, belonging to

Of Cn. Cejus.

an Horse, for stature, feature, colour, strength, limbs, comeliness; but withal, the Owner

of him was sure to die an unhappy death.

This is the misery of Sin, how pleasant, profitable, or advantagious soever it may seem to be unto Flesh and Blood, it hath always Calamity in the end, it ever expires in Trouble.

Fourthly, I acknowledg all, not *confusedly*, as before, through the light of Conscience, but *distinctly*, and feelingly, by the Light of God's Word, closing with the light of Conscience. All this while I went about to please my self, but now I find by woful experience, that the things which I have done, displease the Lord; and therefore now, I desire my Repentance may be answerable to my Sin, (*i. e.*) multiplied, and *ever before me*; that others may hear and learn by my example, how deceitful Sin is, taking away from Men, what it promiseth to bring, *viz.* Pleasure and Contentment; and for one pleasing sight or touch it presents, it presents an ugly face for ever after. O that Men were Wise aforehand, or would be warned by my Example, thus tormented with

with the sight and thought of former Sins, to consider what Sin will do, either sooner or later, when it is once committed ; as it is implied in this short Sentence, a part of *David's Confession*, viz. *My Sin is ever before me !*

The sum whereof may be comprised and presented in these two Positions, viz.

First, *That Sin once committed, will be often presented.*

Secondly, *That whosoever is thus mindful of Sin and troubled about it, to him it is a good sign of the Pardon of it.*

First, *That Sin once committed, will be often presented.* The Act is soon past, but the Guilt remains more firm. Before Repentance, Forgetfulness may cover it, but after, nothing can hide it. Although a Person should be willing, yet Conscience will not suffer it to be out of sight : It is so bitter to the taste, so ugly to the sight, and so heavy a burden to a tender awakened Conscience, that it will not easily out of Memory again : and for any thing is known to the contrary, this was true of *David* to his dying Day, though not always alike for Degrees. If you do not well, *Sin lieth at the Door*, Gen. 4. 7. The presence and conscience of Sin, like a bawling Bawling Dog, will be ever Barking at you ; when you go out, and when you go in, it is ready to fill your Ears with terrifying Clamours. If you sin against the Lord, be sure your Sin will find you out, Numb. 32. 23. both by way of

of Manifestation and Vindication; as it did our first Parents, Righteous *Job*, Zealous *Paul*, (1 Tim. 1. 13. *I was a Persecutor, a Blasphemer, Injurious*, these were always before him, after his Eyes were once opened) and Religious *Austin*, as his Confessions do abundantly testify. All these cried out, as *David* did, *My Sins are ever before me*. This Man complains of one Sin, and that of another, according to the nature of the Sin and measure of delight taken in Commission. Much delight, argueth much consent of the Will, and great Sins do trouble greatly; they appear as it were in Battel Array, and compass a Man about, till they make him cry out, *Wretched Man that I am! I was conceived in Sin*, enough to have sunk me to the lowest Hell, and yet I have not ceased daily to add unto it, by a wilful omission of Duties, and a greedie commission of foul Enormities; I have been Ignorant and Idle; I have been addicted to Drunkenness, Uncleaness, Murther, and Lying, to Pride, Covetousness, and Swearing, to Sacrilege, Bribery, with an infinite more; besides those inward Sins of a more Spiritual Nature, as Infidelity, Idolatry, Impenitency, Hypocrisie, Vain-Glory, Covetousness, &c. Once they appeared but Toys and tricks of Youth, but now the least of them, seems heavier than *Weight* it self: Thus Conscience awakened, and set on work by Justice, brings in
many

many Bills of Account, some of long standing, others lately entred; happy is he that can over-look them without Horror and Delight. It is a great work of the Spirit, and both argue a mighty work of Grace, to stand before the sight of Sin without horror for it, or delight in it; as it was with *David* here: otherwise it will fall out, that upon every presentation of Sin, we should either turn again to act it a-new, at least in Speculation, or sink under it: For commonly, if it appear not delightful, it appeareth very fearful.

For the further opening and illustrating of this Point, it may not be unprofitable to enquire, after the *Time* when, the *Grounds* whereupon, and the *Ends* why, Sin once committed, should be so often presented to the true Penitent?

First, The *Time* when; is either in our Life and Health, or at the hour of Death; sometimes, and to some Persons it is presented in both: To all those living under the Means and Covenant of Grace, commonly the Lord causeth it to be presented in their Life and Health, at one time or other, by one means or other; either by the Ministry of the Word; so the *Law* presents it, and makes Men mourn out of fear; the *Gospel* presents it and causeth more kindly Grief out of Love; or else by the Tongues of Men, our Neighbours; and they our Christian

stian Friends, who do it *privately* in Love, not carrying their Teeth in their Tongues, nor bite whilst they speak, not leaving a Scar upon their Persons, when they are endeavouring to heal a Wound in their Brethren's Actions: And such reprehension should be ever well taken, yea, the Gracious will say *Let the Righteous smite me*: Or by our Enemies in anger. As *Augustin* reports of his Mother *Monica*, that her

* *A young Maid, formerly her Partner in Potting, fell at Variance with her, and (as Malice, when she shoots, draws her Arrows to the head) called her Toss-pot and Drunkard, whereupon Monica reformed her Life and became Temperate. Thus bitter Taunts sometimes make wholesome Physick, when God sanctifies unto us the malice of our Enemies to perform the office of good Will. So Fuller in his Holy State, in the Life of Monica.*

Sin was set before her * by a Servant Maid; and as *Shimei* dealt with *David*. Thus a Man may gain by an Enemy, as Poison unto some Creatures affords Nourishment. As *Telephus* his Imposthume was open'd by the Dart of an Enemy, which was intended for his hurt. And, as they say, those Roses are sweetest which grow near unto

Garlick; so the nearness of an Enemy makes a good Man better. For both Friends and Enemies, the Lord makes use of to set our Sins in order before us. According to the saying of an Heathen, though no Heathenish saying, *That he who would be good, must either*
have

have a faithful Friend to instruct him, or a
 faithful Enemy to correct him. Exclude not
 the good use of many excellent Discourses
 sent abroad for this end. By reading what
 another speaks, a Man may by reflexion ob-
 serve and learn, what himself hath been, and
 what he is for the present. So for the time
 of Life. And then for the hour of Death;
 pain and fear do stir up Conscience to call
 back and present Sin to the Sinner's Eye;
 God withdraws the Vail, and gives the Sin-
 ner penitent, once more a full view of his
 own Fruits, that they may be as much loath-
 ed, as ever they were loved; nay, he per-
 mitteth Satan sometimes to come after and
 show his black Claws, to joyn with Sin, and
 to second these accusing Cries; whereby the
 anguishing Spirits of a poor Penitent (who
 may not live, and yet dares not die)
 are much moved and affrighted, to the as-
 tonishment of unexperienced beholders. This
 is a heavy Conflict, for such as have endured
 the heat of the Day, in the close, when they
 thought all Enemies had been overcome and
 subdued, to meet with such an Assault; and
 yet it may be so order'd in great Love and
 Mercy: Either because they had not seen it
 might before, or that now they might take
 their farewell of it, never to see it more.
 And so truly gracious Souls have their Joy
 and Happiness encreased thereby; (were
 this remembered, it would prove a comfort

to those, whose Religious Friends do often
 end their Days in such distress. For by
 coming so immediately from the sight of
 such an ugly Object, to the Intuition and
 Fruition of such Beauty as is in Christ, the vi-
 sion is more beatificall. To pass from the pre-
 sence of Sin, into the presence of God, doth
 more ravish the Soul with Celestial Joy.
 God in Christ will be keel in Beauty and Glory
 to that Man's Eye and Apprehension, who
 hath lately seen the sinfulness of Sin. As
 the Sun is never more glorious, than when
 it breaks out of a black Cloud, so the Glory
 of Heaven, will certainly be more admirable
 and lovely to those, unto whom Sin hath ap-
 peared exceeding sinful.

Now, if he pass unseen these two Days,
 and if it be not presented to be seen and
 loathed him one of those Hours, then it will
 be presented at the Great Day (which is
 emphatically called the Day of Discovery,
 1 Cor. 13. 12) in sinfulness of Horror, and in-
 evitable Fury. When the Curtain shall be
 drawn aside, and all the secrets of the World
 discovered, and every Man see the actions of
 his life as upon a piece of Taffety spread
 before his eyes, appearing as so many Thorns
 and Venomous Bees, and no Mercy to be
 shew'd, no Grace to be offer'd, which no
 Petitions will be received, nor any voice
 heard, but ye shall be cast into everlasting Fire.
 As may be gather'd from divers passages of

sacred Scripture, viz. *Psal. 50. 21. Matth. 3. 22, 23, 25, 41. Hodie, hodie penitentia leuatur*, saith *St. Augustin.* To day there is room for Repentance; you must repent *now*, or perish then. If the Tap be not now thaw'd, it may be frozen for ever. Hell vomiteth up our highest desires, and will afford no felicities. Happy is he whose Sins are ever before him in a grieved memory, they shall never be set before him *there*; if they vex thee *now*, as a loathed burden, they shall not torment thee *then*: The Sins which ye have seen to Day, ye shall see them again no more for ever.

Secondly, The Grounds whereupon this truth resteth, are such as follow, viz.

1. That inviolable dependency which all effects and conclusions have upon their own Causes and Principles whence they flow. Acts, Powers, and Habits, are unseparable from the Person, as they are one from another. Every Agent is and shall be attended with its own Works; the *Dead in the Lord are blessed, and their Works follow them. The Ox knoweth his Owner, and the Ass his Master's Crib.* Sin lieth at the Sinner's door, and will acknowledg no other Master. What is once done cannot be undone. No Power can recal it from being. Only a penitent fight of Sin, may hide it from the sight of Justice, and Mercy can recal it from being imputed. An act contracting Guilt, may pass from a Person, and yet not redound upon the Person, by a supernatural interpolation

position of satisfying Merit. Christ must come between and stay his Course, or else Sin would not only be set *before* us, but even *upon* us in full Guilt and Weight, and that for ever.

2. The nature of the Soul in her retaining Faculties, is another Ground; whereby she is necessarily enabled by reflexion to recal, to see and judg all her own past Actions. This is essential, and therefore it is, that such Power and Impressions do remain inseparated, either to punish or chear them, by the remembrance of things past. To which you may adjoyn the office of Conscience; which is to bear witness, and accuse or excuse, according to Demerit. A guilty Conscience, we use to say, (and more say, than some are aware of what they say) is as a thousand Witnesses. It will tell us all that we have done for many Years ago, and present us with all the Follies of our Youth. This is the Book wherein Men may read their own History and Doom, both what they have done and what they have deserved. There are two Rules; the one is God's Word, which pointeth out both Estates; and the other is every Man's Conscience, which is privy to the frame and standing of his Heart, and which of these Estates is his. As long then, as there is such a Soul with us, endow'd with such admirable Faculties, viz. Understanding, Memory, and Conscience; so long will Sin be before us; if we once do
evil,

evil, we shall hear of it ever after, till Sanctification be perfect, and Grace be crowned with Glory.

3. The Order of Divine Justice, requiring some proportion between the pleasure taken in Sin, and the vexation for it after. Beautiful it appeared in coming, but ugly and deformed in going: sweet it was in the offer and act, but bitter in the close; like Honey which is very sweet, but begets most bitter Choller: Or as *Clandius* his Mushroom, which was pleasant but poysonful. How much she hath glorified her self, and lived deliciously, so much torment and sorrow give her, Rev. 18. 7. As it shall appear hereafter with the *Impenitents* in Hell, suffering by way of *Satisfaction*; so it is here on Earth with *Penitents*, suffering by way of Correction. Intention of delight in the act of sinning, is justly recompensed with extension of continued Grief. It will vex you long, because it did affect you much: Sin was before you, when it should not, and now it must be before you, when you would not. Justice being refused in the first, will be heard in the latter.

Thirdly, The *Ends* of all this, wherefore a single Commission is followed with frequent Presentations, we may conceive to be such as these.

1. To keep the Heart of God's People in a spiritual frame of Self-denial and Humility, and that the habitual grace of Repentance

may be upheld, and more lively in exercise. Hereupon I am apt to think that Mr. Fox, (that industrious preserver of the Honour of many of God's Servants) was observed to say, *That nothing did him more hurt than his Graces, nothing more good than his Sins*, being ever before him. His Graces through the prevailing power of Corruption remaining, were ready to puff him up, and to set him in God's room, by self-seeking: whilst his Sins kept him down, and kept him humble and meek. Few know the benefit of this Combat: It is one of the best remedies against spiritual Pride and Security, to keep the Mind upon Sin, and Sin in the Mind. Hence that confident speech of renowned *Austin*, I dare be bold to say, that it is good for proud Persons to fall into some Sin, *Unde sibi displiceant, qui jam sibi placendo ceciderunt. Salubrius enim Petrus displicuit quando flevit, quam sibi placuit quando presumpsit.* Aug. de Civit. Dei. lib. 14. That they may be humbled as Peter was, and so saved.

2. To terrifie his Adversaries, and so to leave them inexcusable, when the full weight of Sin falls upon them. If the memory of Sin do so follow them which have repented and are pardoned, how will it be with the Impenitent? And what shall be the end of those who obey not the Gospel? *Cain* had his Sin presented in the Morning, and *Judas* in the evening of his Day; to assure all Men, that

that they are sure to hear of Sin again, either sooner or later.

It is to admonish all sorts to be Wise and Watchful, lest Sin deceive them. It cometh masked, and goeth away smoothly, as if it would never return; and say, it were so minded indeed; yet Justice will recal it, and cause it to be unvail'd, at such a time, when you shall have best leisure to attend it and look upon it. As it is with a Serjeant, who hath a Warrant to Arrest a Debtor, but seeing him in the company of many of his Friends, who are to stand up for him, passeth by, as if he saw him not; or meant no such matter against him; till after, winding about, he meets him alone and carrieth him away. So it is here. Sin hath authority (the strength of Sin is the Law) to attack every Son of Adam, but seeing them in the height of Carnal Content and Jollity, Eating, Drinking, Playing, and fearing nothing; while they are in such delightful and Simpleasing Company, nothing is done; Sin is not seen, Conscience is not discharged, all is at rest and quiet; till after some time, they are found alone, withdrawn from their wild Companions, into a Sick-bed, or before the Judgment-seat of Christ, then Sin comes suddenly, and irresistably, like the *Philistines* upon *Sampson*; then account must be given of old Scores, and every one must bear his own burden,

burden, there is no way to escape, no Bail to be taken.

4. We may conceive it is to perfect Mortification, and to prevent the dangerous violence of Enemies from without. Satan tempteth, the World allureth, Company entice, and bad examples would draw us powerfully after them, did not this Image past, terrifie and withhold us by continual Alarms. *Take heed, and yield not for your lives; remember my Wormwood and my Gall; and, like the burnt Child, dread the fire, &c.* This Sin doth not directly and by it self, but *accidentally*, and as it is over-ruled and ordered by an higher Hand; *occasionally* to humble and drive us out of our selves, that we may fetch daily more mortifying Virtue from Christ. Thus Light is brought out of Darknes, and Good extracted out of Evil.

The Use of this Point may be three-fold,
First, To inform the Judgment of two things.

1. About the deceitfulness of Sin. It cometh at first pleasantly, as *Judeth* to *Holo-phernes* (dazling his Eyes with the splendor of Visage, and charming his Ear with the sweetness of Discourse) clad with smiling circumstances of Pleasure, Profit, and much Content, and after it seems to go away presently, as if it would never return: And may be resembled not unfitly to a certain Serpent that hath a shining Skin and a pleasant

ant smell, but is a Serpent still, and makes
 use of both only to ensnare and kill: Or to
 the *Indian* Beast, which hath the Face of a
 Man, and the body of a *Lion*, who coun-
 terfeits the sound of *Flutes* to charm Passen-
 gers, and then entraps and kills them with a
 tail of the *Scorpion*: Thus under the smiling
 brows of Sin, may be discovered an hun-
 dred snares, who strangle while they seem
 to embrace. The cup of Hony will end in
 Gall, even the gall of Asps, *Job* 20. 12, 13.
 Of which *Pliny* writeth, that it is their Poi-
 son; and to this Poison is Sin there compa-
 red: for when an *Asp* stingeth a Man, it
 hath a provoking faculty first to make him
 laugh, but then casteth him into a sleep, till
 the Poison by little and little gets to the
 Heart, after which it paineth him more than
 ever it delighted him; so doth Sin. It is a
 bitter sweet. *Bernard* compareth it to the
 Itch, which first yieldeth pleasure, and af-
 terwards smart. And *St. Austin* saith, Many
 devour that on Earth, which they must digest
 in Hell, where they shall have Punishment
 without Pity, Misery without Mercy, Sor-
 row without Succour, Torments without
 End. Thus as the Ancients that have de-
 lighted to make Medals, caused the Faces
 of them to be quite different and contrary;
 on the one side they graved an *Achilles*, on
 the other they figured a *Thersites*; if on one
 side an *Abfalon*, on the other an *Aesop*; if

on one side a Rose, on the other an Onion: The same may be observed in the Medal of Sin; if you look on the one side, you shall see a Figure infinitely charming, on the other an hideous Fury. When therefore thou art making a covenant with Sin, say, O Man, to thy Soul, as Boaz said to his Kinsman, *Ruth. 4. 4. What time thou buyest it, thou must have Ruth with it.* So if thou wilt have the sweet of Sin, thou must have the Curse with it; and let thy Soul answer as he doth, *No, I may not do it, I shall spoil a better Inheritance.* Follow Aristotle's advice, to look upon Pleasure going and not coming.

*Principium dulce est, sed finis amoris amarus:
Lata venire Venus, tristis abire solet.*

They leave Horror and Terror behind them. As the Head of the *Polypus*, which is sweet to the Palat, but after causeth troublesome Sleep, and frightful Dreams; as *Plutarch* reporteth. At present you only see the pleasure, not the torment of Sin. Look upon *Cain* and *Judas*, and they will tell thee what a Scorpion it will be in thy side one time or other: That with *Orphean* Ayrs, and dextrous *Warblers*, it will lead thee to the flames of Hell.

2. About the folly of Man to think otherwise of Sin; either that God will forget it, or that they shall never see it again: Hence

it is that there are so many flie and hy-
 pocritical Persons in the World, that la-
 bour to carry all things in the Clouds and
 dark Contrivances, that think to dance in a
 Net, as we say, and not be seen; and are
 still very desperate Wretches, close Drun-
 kards, Cheaters, despisers of that which is
 Good. Well, let them look to it, and re-
 member the words of *Moses*, to the Tribes
 of *Israel*, *Reuben*, and *Gad*, Numb. 32. 23.
Be sure your Sin will find you out. God is
 Justice and Memory it self, he cannot forget,
 nor (things as they now stand) forgive
 without satisfaction made and applied. Man
 is the unhappy Parent of Sin, and must ac-
 knowledg his own issue. As sure then, as
 there is an ever-living God above, and an
 everlasting Light within a Man, a Soul with
 retaining Faculties and reflecting Power,
 enobled with that branch of Eternity [*Im-*
mortality,] so sure will Sin return, and the
 Soul shall see and acknowledg her own Acti-
 ons; either *here* to begin and continue Evan-
 gelical sorrow, or *hereafter*, to beget and increase
 Infernal Horrors and Terrors inexpressible. It
 is great weakness to think otherwise. Believe
 those that have had, and given experience of
 this Truth; who have felt the burden of
 Sin, and have been hunted with it from place
 to place, and could find no peace nor rest a
 long time; and all because Sin was ever be-
 fore

fore them. Happy are those who learn Wisdom from the harms of others.

Secondly, The use hereof may tend to reform the Life, by reprovng three sorts of Misbelievers: Though, as *Calvin* said in one of his Books, concerning God's Government of the World, I suppose my Discourse will be unwelcome to many, and that because it is a smart and sharp reprehension. Men love not the taste of Wormwood, of Incredulity. But the Diet, though not so toothsome, yet is wholesome; this rebuke though not so pleasing, yet is surely profitable, and especially being seasonable and suitable.

And, 1. It reproves such as make a mock of Sin, *Prov. 14.9. Fools make a mock of Sin*; and drink down Iniquity like Water, selling themselves to work Wickedness, and so heaping up Wrath against the Day of Wrath. As if Sin were but a Trick of Youth, a Toy, a Vapour, a Bubble, to be seen to day, and never after; as if it were as soon past as done, and as short-liv'd as the *Ephemora*, that lived but eight Hours, and were no more. How do such swarm amongst us? Have we not our *Cains*, that kill their Brethren with Envy and Anger? Our *Nimrods*, mighty and cunning Hunters, after the Souls, Bodies, and Estates of Men? Our *Esau's*, that sell their Birth-right, all their hope and right to Heaven, for Carnal Contentment? Our *Achan's*, who commit Sacriledg, and steal Coals

Coals from the Altar, to burn up themselves
 and Posterity after them, by appropriating,
 or selling the consecrated Portion? Our
Abab's, that covet their Neighbours *Vinyards*,
 their Places and Goods, to build up their
 own Houses higher, though it be with Blood?
 Our *Jezebel's*, in many proud and flanting
 Minions, who mispend their precious time
 in Spotting, Painting, Gaudy-dressing, as
 if they were meer lumps of Flesh, or a Body
 without a Soul, having no other Deity but
 Pleasure and Ambition, no Idol but their
 conceited Beauty? Have we not our ambiti-
 ous *Absolon's*, our Politick *Achitophels*, Vain-
 glorious *Herods*, whose natural inclinations
 proceed from them as flashing streaks from a
 Cloud, to be instantly turned into Lightning;
 Many a Worldly *Demas*, who have no other
 God but *Self* to adore, and therefore con-
 found Elements, and mix Stars with the
 Dust of the Earth, bring God to submit to
 the Creature, whereby to attain the end of
 their exorbitant pretentions. And which is
 worst of all, even in the Lord's House there
 are found *Hophni* and *Phineas*, *Gebazi* and
Simon Magus, too many dark Lanterns, blind
 deceitful Guides, whose Feet cast Dirt in their
 Mouths, and whose Lives are at *Sanballat's*
 Work, when the Doctrine is, or should be at
Nehemiah's, and make *Hebrew* of their Dis-
 courses, reading them backward in their
 Practice; whose *Inconformity* pulleth down
 more

more than they build? We know the end of these Men, and yet dare imitate them. *Te miror Antoni, quorum facta imiteris, eorum exitum non perhorrescere*, was the Orator's saying against *Antonius*; I wonder, *Anthony*, thou art not afraid of the end of those Men, whose deeds thou dost imitate. Time hasteth when such shall feel, what they will not now believe: When they shall see nothing but Sin, hear nothing but Devils and yelling of damned Ghosts; remember nothing but the vanity of Carnal Pleasures past, and the eternity of present Wo. O Fools and Madmen, will they then cry out, that we were, to forget God, hate Instruction, and imitate such wild Wretches, knowing their end aforehand, and so delightfully to embrace this deceitful Harlot *Sin*, to our own Ruine, &c. But then it will be too late to complain.

2. Such, who, though they do not slight Sin in it self, yet they are thus conceited of it, that it will never trouble them after Commission. In the *Act*, they think the bell and worst is past. True it is, you your selves may make a shift to forget it, for a time to put it out of your sight; and your Neighbours who once knew, may forget it for ever; But God and your own Conscience cannot finally; they may as soon cease to be, as to forget to work according to their Nature. What is not now, may be hereafter. Men lose not their right, because they take not
that

the time, which other Men ignorantly pre-
 sume them. *Nullum tempus occurrit Regi.*
 The King may lay claim to his right at any
 time; forbearance is no acquittance; much
 less can any time prescribe against the King
 of Kings. Because Sentence is not speedily exe-
 cuted against an Evil-doer, shall we therefore
 conclude that it will never be? The thing
 is certain, the time free. Some difference
 indeed there is between the commission of Sin,
 and the presentation of it after; Sins are com-
 mitted single and apart, now one, then ano-
 ther; flaggish Idleness in the Morning, swi-
 ndish Drunkenness at Mid-day, and filthy
 Whoredom at Night; the first occasioneth
 the second, and the last is a Punishment of
 the former; but (as Vapours that ascend
 invisibly, come down in Storms and plenti-
 ful Showers) they are presented altogether.
 These things, even all these things hast thou
 done.) As it is with Stewards, their dis-
 burshments are divers, and at divers times,
 but the Account is brought in at once, as
 one; so it is with Sinners, *Item for this, Item*
for that: Which Multitudes never think of;
 and yet this is one thing that makes Sin so
 heavy.
 3. Such as put Sin off, and will not see it;
 and deal with their Souls as others do with
 their Bodies, who when their Beauty is de-
 faded, they desire to hide it from themselves
 by false Glasses, and from others by false Ex-
 cuses.

cuses. If they are told, these and these are your Sins; they will not acknowledg them. What, am I a Dog, that I should do such a thing? When as indeed, there is no Dog, though he want Reason, will do so much against Reason, as some Natural Men that have Reason. Yet a private *Christian*, a loving Friend or Neighbour, must not seem to dislike what they do, so as to admonish them, though wisely and lovingly done; and are like the *Nettle*, which will sting though touched never so gently. *Ministers* must not reprove them, then they personate; *Magistrates* must not punish them, for then they are Cruel; *others* must not mind them of their Duty, for their good, for then they are *Bulie-bodies*, intermeddling with Matters that concern them not; *What have you to do with us? Are you our Keepers? Let us alone, we must answer for our selves, and every Vessel shall stand on his own bottom, &c.* Like stray'd *Asses*, they will not be brought Home: And the more you touch them, like *Toads*, the more they swell; and like *Serpents*, the more they are meddled with, the more *Poison* they gather to spit out. Go about to cool them, you shall but add to their heat, as the *Smith's* *Forg-fries*, when cold water is cast upon it; and as hot water stirred, casts up the more fume. But let them know for all their anger, that Sin will be presented, either to humble them here, or to damn them

them hereafter. A Day is coming, and it
 hasteneth, when you shall see them all presen-
 ted at once, and shall no way avoid that
 sight; when you will think you see nothing
 but Fire, that you hear nothing but a sud-
 den noise, passing the greatest clap of horrid
 Thunder, and shall choose Death rather, if
 it were possible to annihilation, than Life
 with such an object before you. As it fell
 out to that usurping *Richard*, after the hor-
 rible Murther committed upon his innocent
 Nephews; he could rest no where, he could
 be no where free; a tumultuous army of
 Thoughts, struck an Alarm to his Repose;
 at Bed and Board, Day and Night, alone and
 in company, he thought he saw and heard
 them; when as in truth it was his *Sin* that
 was ever legally before him, and his own
 guilty Conscience that did pursue him: And
 to that *Judg Morgan*, who gave Sentence
 upon that vertuous and innocent Lady *Jane*;
 in so much that he grew Mad shortly after,
 and still cried out, *Take away the Lady Jane*
from me; and in that Horror ended his Days
 and wretched Life. As *Mr. Speed* relates in
 the Life of *Q. Mary*, and *Mr. Clark*, in his
 Life of the Lady *Jane*. And so it will be
 with you here, or hereafter. Tell me then,
 is it not better to see them apart now, when
 you may repent and be freed, than to put
 them off unto another Day, when you must
 see them altogether, and sink under them

without any hope of recovery? O consider this, all ye that forget God, lest he tear you in pieces, and there be none to deliver!

Thirdly, The use of this Point may be to instruct the Person in matter of Duty; and so like a well drawn Picture, looks upon all that look upon it. If this be so, that Sin once committed will be often presented, it prompts all, 1. To think thus of Sin; When you are tempted, remember this Text set before you here, or else you will think of it after to your pain. It is momentary and frothy that delighteth you in Sin, but it is eternal that will vex and torment you. To repent, is to take a bitter, though wholesome Potion, and Impenitency is followed with Damnation. Say you purpose and do repent, yet your Sin will ever be before you, either to grieve and terrify you, as it did *David*, or to allure you to the same again, as it did *Augustin* often. Especially the sins of *Blood*, corporal *Uncleaness*, *Apostacy* after knowledg and profession of the Truth. These sink Men either under senseless Sottishness, or unsupportable Horror. Witness *Cain* for the first, *David* for the second, and *Francis Spira* for the third; because they are not only Sins but Scandals. *David* thought he might have cover'd one Sin with another, Adultery with Murther, but hereby they were both augmented and seen further: Not only he himself, but all Posterity must know it; *David* did that which

was

was right in the Eyes of the Lord, *save only*
in the matter of Uriah; That stuck in *Memo-*
ry, and shall in *History*. Not because he had
 never committed other Sins, but because
 none of the rest were so scandalous, none so
 soiled, none so burdensome to the Con-
 science as these, being against so much Light,
 of Nature, of Scripture, and of Humane
 Laws; few Repenting, none without diffi-
 culty, and many falling into presumption, or
 despair by them. Under the guilt of any of
 these, for the most part, Men feel either too
 much, or too little; either they keep them-
 selves out of sight always, when the Con-
 science is seared, the Heart hardened, and
 Men are past feeling, or else they are still pre-
 sent and staring in the face of Conscience,
 as it were with the eyes of many Devils.
 Think of this aforehand, and beware, 1. Of
Apostacy, in whole, or in part; because it is
 better never to know the way of Righteousness,
 than to sin against Knowledg. 2. Of *Mur-*
der, because Men are made after God's
 Image, and such Blood crieth from the Earth,
 till it have hearing: So many drops of Blood,
 so many Tongues, and every drop a Voice
 to cry for Vengeance. Give them Blood to
 drink, for they are worthy, Rev. 16. 6. And
 it is threatned, He that sheddeth Man's Blood,
 by Man his Blood shall be shed, Gen. 9. 6.
 3. Of *Adultery*, because it brings with it
 much guilt and great stain upon the Soul.

Hoc grande flagitium est, saith *Job 31.11*. This is an hainous Crime; a Wickedness with a witness, a Fire that consumeth to destruction. God will judg it, who ever be slack to punish it. Hear what the Scripture saith of this Sin, the hainousness and danger thereof, as a motive to avoid it. *Prov. 22.14. A Whore is a deep Ditch, and he that is abhorred of the Lord, shall fall therein.* David moiled himself in this deep Pit, and there might have stuck in the Mire, had not God drawn him out by a merciful Violence, and purged him with Hyssop from that abhorred filth. *Prov. 6.32,33. Who so committeth Adultery with a Woman, lacketh understanding; he that doth it, destroyeth his own Soul. A Wound and Dishonour shall he get, and his Reproach shall not be wiped away.* It is not therefore leve peccatum, a small Sin, as the Pope's Canonists call it. Divine Justice doth not use to kill Flies with Beetles. Briefly, it is a Sin that hurts both Body and Soul, it hurts Men in Goods, in Name, Posterity; and will be ever before them, to make them mourn and say, *How have we hated Instruction, and our Hearts despised Reproof?* And have not obeyed the Voice of our Teachers? O what length and depth of Comfort doth a Man lose for a little Folly! not worth the name of Pleasure, because it is brutish; and brings many and heavy burdens indeed; a stain upon the Soul, rottenness into the Bones, and

a blemish indelible on the Name. Who would purchase that at so dear a rate, which he may have for nothing? Or use Violence, where he may have leave and a blessing too? Run the way of Hell for that Pleasure, which they may enjoy more fully in the right Path and Way of Heaven? This Men consider not. Had *David* thought of the end, he would never have adventured on the beginning; had he thought of ever seeing Sin, he would have wished he had never seen *Bathsheba*, or that his Eyes had gone alone and left his Heart at home; then they could never have brought their Lord into such a straight. *Remember David and all his troubles.* His sweet never countervailed his bitter Sawce. *Bathsheba* was a pleasing Object for a time, but Sin is fearful and grievous for ever. Lust wrestleth till it bring forth Sin, but Sin groweth and laboureth till it bring forth Death. And although the Combat be healed, and the Wound healed, yet some Scars remain. A great deal of preventing Sorrow and wholsome Suffering, must be undergone; reade it in *David*. The Child that was born unto him must die. *Thamar* was defiled, *Amnon* murdered, and he himself turned out of House and Kingdom, by his own Son. (*It is a bitter thing to sin against the Lord.*) He fasteth and prayeth, weepeth and sigheth, saying often, or to this effect: O Lord, rebuke me not in thine Anger, neither chasten me

in thy hot Displeasure; have Mercy upon me, O
 Lord, for I am weak, O Lord heal me, for my
 Bones are vexed. My Soul is sore troubled, but
 thou, O Lord, how long? Return, O Lord,
 deliver my Soul; O save me for thy Mercy-sake,
 I am weary with groaning, all the Night make I
 my Bed to swim; I water my Couch with my
 Tears; mine Eye is consumed, because of grief.
 How long wilt thou forget me, O Lord, for ever?
 How long wilt thou hide thy Face from me?
 My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?
 Why art thou so far from helping me, and from
 the words of my Roaring? O my God, I cry in
 the Day-time, but thou hearest not, and in the
 Night-season and am not silent: I am poured
 out like Water, and all my Bones are out of joint,
 my Heart is like Wax, it is melted in the midst
 of my Bowels: my strength is dried up like a
 Pot sheard, my Tongue cleaves to the roof of my
 Jaws: Have Mercy upon me, O Lord, for I am
 in trouble; my Eye is consumed with grief, yea,
 my Soul and my Belly: My Life is spent with
 grief, and my Tears with sighing; my strength
 faileth because of my Iniquities, and my Bones
 are consumed: Make thy Face to shine upon thy
 Servant, save me for thy Mercy-sake. Day and
 Night thy Hand is heavy upon me, my moisture is
 turned into the drought of Summer. Blessed is
 he whose Sin is covered, and whose Transgression
 is forgiven, O Lord, rebuke me not in thy
 Wrath, neither chasten me in thine hot Displea-
 sure: For thine Arrows stick fast in me, and thy

thy Hand presseth me sore: There is no soundness in my Flesh, because of thine Anger; neither is there any rest in my Bones, because of my Sin; for mine Iniquities are gone over my Head, as a heavy Burden, they are too heavy for me. I am troubled, I am bowed down greatly, I go mourning all the Day long. My Loins are filled with a loathsome Disease; there is no soundness in my Flesh. I am feeble, and sore broken. My Heart panteth, my Strength faileth me; my groaning is not hid from thee: Yea, Lord, all my desire is before thee. Have mercy upon me, O my God, according to thy loving Kindness; according to the multitude of thy tender Mercies, blot out my Transgression, wash me thoroughly from mine Iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin; for I acknowledg my Transgressions, and my Sin is ever before me: Purge me with Hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than Snow. Make me to hear the voice of Joy and Gladness, that the Bones which thou hast broken may rejoice. Hide thy Face from my Sins, and blot out all mine Iniquities; create in me a clean Heart, O God, and renew a right Spirit within me. Cast me not away from thy Presence, take not thy Holy Spirit from me. Restore unto me the joy of thy Salvation, and uphold me with thy free Spirit: Then will I teach Transgressors thy Ways, and Sinners shall be converted unto thee. I remembered God and was troubled, I complain'd, and my Spirit was overwhelmed: Thou holdest mine Eyes waking; I am sore trou-

bled that I cannot speak. Will the Lord cast me off for ever, and will he be favourable no more? Is his Mercy gone for ever? Doth his Promise fail for evermore? And will he be favourable no more? Hath God forgotten to be gracious? Hath he in anger shut up his tender Mercies, &c.

Stay now, and look back and say; Is not this a great Mourning? Was not *David* in deep distress? How many ways doth he take? What words doth he use? Do not you see a Penitent exceedingly humbled, a Heart bleeding, a sad and disfigured Face, a Body made thin, Sighings redoubled one upon another? Here are Joints pined away with sadness; here is a fixed love of Tears; the joyous Harp hangs up, and knows no more what Songs of Triumph mean; he is wholly employed in expressing Grievs. He dies to all Mortal things of the Earth, and being cast upon the Sea of Repentance, he makes it to eccho with Groanings, and continually swell with his Weepings. And all to describe his condition by the presence of his Sins, and excite the Divine Compassion towards him. And if *David*, penitent *David*, was thus pursued with the thoughts and sight of Sin, if he were sent, and kept such a strong Beggar for Mercy all his days, for the matter of *Uriah*, Oh what will become of most of us, who sin more and desire less, who are more cunning to Transgress, and
more

more careless in Praying? Where is our Rhetorick, our Fervour, our Sighs, our Tears? Oh, how faint are our Desires? How cold our Prayers? As if our many Sins were never before us, or not fearful to us; as if Mercy and Grace were as easie to get as to lose; or as if Heaven and God's Favour would fall upon us at last, without any labour, which cost *David* so much Fasting, so many Prayers, so many Tears in secret? And yet his Fasting, his Prayers, and Tears could not do it, without satisfying-Blood applied and pleaded. If it be so, as we have proved from the Text, then do you your selves set *Sin* before you, be desirous of it, and patient while others do it. Yea, kiss that Hand, and praise God for that Means whereby it is done: Attend to your Pastours, look your selves in the Glass of the Law, and pray with *David*, *search and try me, O Lord*, set my Sins in order before me now, that I may bewail them, and thou mayest forgive them! Never leave this endeavour, till you be enabled to see and say, *Wo, and alas, wretched Man that I am, thus to dishonour God, what shall I say or do? Mine Iniquities have separated between me and my God. My Sins have hid his Face from me, so that I cannot see him. The Glory is departed, and that bright Sun fearfully eclipsed towards me. Can I rejoyce with the joy of other People? Can I laugh and be merry, while my Sins are always before me?*

me? Can I sing the Lord's Song in a strange Land! Call me not Naomi, but call me Marah; the Lord deals bitterly with me, yet deservedly. Sin hath been my Delight, now it is my Torment; I have followed Sin, and now Sin followeth me: See, do you not see my Drunkenness here, my Whoredoms there? my Pride, my Hypocrisie, my Covetousness, and Vain-glory? a bundle of blasphemous Thoughts in one place, and a flying roll of Lyes and Oaths in another place; save me from them, sweet Jesus! A wounded Israelite was healed by looking upon the Brasen Serpent: Wounded I am, the stings of Death (all of my own making, for other, Death hath none) do stick in me, and compass me about; to the Lord Jesus I look, unto his Arms I flie, and there resolve to rest. Yet, me thinks I hear, and that all others should hear, Husbands accusing me of Wrong and Injustice, Virgins and Wives complaining of a Stain brought by me to their Beds and Bodies; my Neighbours muttering out my breach of Wedlock band, yea, all my Folly and Prodigality. What shall I say? Or whither shall I go? My Sins are ever before me! Speak no word of comfort, raise me not up, but rather trample me under Feet, as unfavoury Salt; cast me out of Company, as unworthy to live, or breath: O ye Heavens, why do ye shine upon me? O thou Air, why do'st thou refresh me? O thou Earth, why do'st thou bare me up? It is I that have rebelled against our Sovereign Lord; it is I that have play'd the Beast; it is I

I that have been so ungrateful and forgetful :
 My Sins are ever before me. Droop, O my
 Soul, and weep abundantly, hang down the
 Head, and weep and mourn in deep bitterness.
 It is better to lose the sense of Seeing by weeping,
 than always to see Sin. Resolve never to look
 cheerfully, much less to entertain a thought of
 Joy, till thou hearest Christ saying to thee, Son
 be of good cheer, thy Sins are forgiven
 thee!

No more of this here, the second Point
 comes to hand, viz.

2. Doct. That whosoever is thus mindful of
 Sin, and troubled about it, to him it is a good
 sign of the pardon of it, and of his being in the
 state of Grace.

Multitudes of Scriptures may be produced
 proving this Conclusion, by just Consequence
 and easie Deduction. Some are noted in
 the Margin *. Examples

to illustrate, you have in all
 the Saints of God, of whose
 Conversion, and being in a
 state of Grace, we ought

to be assured; evidenced to our Faith, by
 the Word recording it, and to our knowledge
 by this following trouble for and about Sin.
 As in David, here and in many other Psalms;
 In Hezekiah, Mary Magdalen, St. Peter, and

Psal. 5. 7. & 32. 5. & 38. 4. Isa. 38. 17. Luk. 7. 38. Mat.
 26. ult. 1 Tim. 1. 13. Act. 2. 43. & 16. 30.

S. Paul,

S. Paul, the two great Apostles, the latter of which was a furious Persecutor of Christianity, till subdued by the Spirit of God; and of a Ravening Wolf, was made a Lamb of the Fold; with those mentioned in the *Acts* of the Apostles, and many others of our own Knowledge, who have and do speak out of experience, and most comfortable assurance, that it was good for them that ever they were thus troubled; and I believe, never any read or heard of any that miscarried, who once came to this kindly sight of Sin. And there are two Grounds of this truth.

Reason 1. The *First* is God's Order, which he observes in the Conversion of a Person, and Sanctification of our Natures, by discovering the Maladies, and setting Sin before the Eye of that Sinner, whose safety he desires and intends. *Partly*, to stay him from running on further towards Hell; *partly*, to prepare him for the receipt and exercise of Regenerating Grace, and *partly*, to keep him humble, and weaned from an immoderate love of Worldly Glory, as from the former Discourse will more fully appear.

Reason 2. *Secondly*, The other Reason is, God's free Promises annexed to the second Covenant, and presupposing this Condition. Only *Faith* is the condition of the Covenant, but this *trouble of Mind* is the condition and companion of Faith. As *legally* considered, it is a condition Preparative, and preceding Faith;

Faith; as *Evangelically*, it is an unseparable Companion ever following. *Behold this self-same thing, that ye sorrowed after a Godly sort, what carefulness it wrought in you, &c.* 2 Cor. 7. 10, 11. Faith is in us first, in order of Nature at least, though *Godly sorrow* is apt first to appear; as sap and life are first in the Root, yet Buds, Leaves and Fruits first discover themselves in the Branches. *They shall look upon me whom they have pierced; there is Faith; for Christ crucified, can be beheld with no other Eye; and they shall mourn for him, &c.* Zech. 12. 10. There is *brokenness* of Spirit, *Spiritual trouble* resulting from it. It is an hard question in Divinity, *Whether Faith be no part of Repentance?* Which some resolve thus *: If Repentance (of which this Trouble is a branch) be consider'd largely, for the whole work of Conversion, so Faith is comprised in it; if *strictly*, so it is the cause thereof: However, it is apparent they are nearly allied, they are Sister-Graces; where the former is, there is the latter also.

* *Synops. purio. Theolog. Disp. 32. S. 40.*

Reason 3. To which, a *third* Ground may be added: When Man approacheth near unto God, he seeth both himself and Sin better: Sin appears to be greater, and himself lesser: The Divine Light and Purity, represents both as they are in deed, and not as Satan's Jesuits (Pleasure and Profit) do misreport:

As

As it is with the Moon, the further off it is from the Sun, the greater it is; but by near approaching, it appears lesser. It is St. *Augustin's* allusion in one of his Epistles. Thus it is with Man in respect of God; *Quò propius ad Deum accedit Homo, eò melius sentit, quàm misere sit, & abjectæ conditionis*, saith *Rivet*; The nearer Man cometh to God, the better he seeth his own miserable Condition: According to that of *Gregory* in his *Morals*, *Quanto magis internæ Divinitatis conspiciunt omnes Sancti, tantò magis se nihil esse cognoscunt*: When the Saints by Faith come to apprehend Spiritual Mysteries, then they clearly see their own nothingness; that glorious Sun discovers all their Dust; they are ashamed of their droppings, when they stand before that Ocean. As the great Doctor of the *Gentiles*, who was immediately inspired by the Holy Spirit, and of great Sanctity, no less then a Cherubim scorched with Celestial Ardours, and who pitched his Feet upon the front of the Sun, became most vile in his own Eyes, when he was carried up nearest to God. Such poverty of Spirit, such trouble of Mind, such a sight of Sin, is an infallible sign of our Conversion to God, and of obtained Pardon.

Object. It may be objected, May not a Natural, Unregenerate Man; such as have no renewing Grace, have a sight of Sin? May not they be troubled about Sin, and yet never return to, amend and procure Pardon? *Ans.*

Ans. Doubtless they may not only see Sin with some trouble and distaste, but also leave the exercise thereof; they may see Sin and be brought, I say, to some trouble about it, by the inward light of Natural Conscience, by the use of outward means, while they live within the bounds of a Visible Church; by the fear and force of Humane Laws, or by some heavy Judgment falling upon them in their Bodies and Estates; all, or any of which, may force open their Eyes to see, and acknowledg their own evil ways; as it fell out with *Pharaoh*, who sighed at every Plague, and seemed to be willing to turn to God: And so did *Ahab*, *Saul*, and *Judas*. Yea, they may go further, to leave some Sins, at least for a time, as it is probable *Herod* did at *St. John's* Preaching; and yet for all this, they may not repent Evangelically, so as to be grieved and thoroughly changed. But this is it we say; *No Man in a state of Nature can see Sin, and be troubled about it as David here was.*

Vebridius * exceedingly hated, *de questione magna, responsionem brevem*, a short Answer to a weighty Question. A little more therefore to clear this in hand; see the difference of the sight of Sin that is in Natural Men and Unregenerate, from that of true Converts, *viz.*

* *Aug. refers Epist. 23. ad Bonifacium, non procul à fine.*

First, David's sorrow proceeded from Love:
When

When he considered, that God who had done so great things for him, was dishonoured by him, and displeased with him; that his own Heart was made unfit for God's Service, and that the common Enemies were occasioned to rejoyce and blaspheme; then he burst out into this supplicatory Confession: This was the Fountain whence his penitential Tears did flow. But thus it is not with any meer graceless Person; his sorrow for Sin is at the best from *Fear*, not from *Love*. *Judas* had an hellish sorrow, a desperate grief for Sin; *David* was *Evangelical*. *Against thee, thee only have I sinned*. Lo, there lay the pinch of his grief, in that he had offended so good a God, that had maintained him, loved, delivered, crowned, and redeemed him: Oh, *against thee, thee only!* Such matchless Love, melting Bowels, such precious Blood of such a Saviour. He is pricked with the Thorns of Christ's Crown, he bled over his bleeding Wounds, with the truly sorrowful Soul, even tares himself in pieces, for taring Christ's Side open.

Secondly, It was free, like Water out of a Spring. Fained, forced Grief is nothing worth*; it is like that of

* *Virtus nolensium nulla est.*

Judas, which was fired out of him, as sweet Water is out of Roses; and squeezed out of him, as Verjuice is out of Crabs: But gracious Persons are Volunteers in their sorrow; which
we

we see practised by *David*, after he had numbered the People, 2 Sam. 24. 10. *His Heart smote him, and David said to the Lord, Take away the iniquity of thy Servant, for I have done very foolishly.* And a shadow hereby we find in the example of *Epaminondas* the Theban General, who the next day after Victory and Triumph, went drooping and hanging down his Head; and being asked why he did so? Answered, Yesterday I found myself too much elated with Vain glory, therefore I correct myself to day. But a better example we have of *David*, whose *Heart smote him*, as before. He was not smitten by God's Hand, or the Prophet's Reproof, as afterwards; yet his sanctified Conscience did its Office, that of a faithful Monitor; his Heart misgave him. Bee-masters tell us, those are the best Hives that make the greatest noise: Sure it is, that Heart is best, that suffers a Man not to sleep in Sin. As for Unregenerate Men, it is not so with them.

Thirdly, David saw Sin, and was troubled about it, as it was Sin, ugly as Hell, opposite to the holy and pure Nature of God, a defacer of his Image, and pleasing only to the Devil, God's greatest Enemy. But Natural Men, see and grieve for Sin, only as it is attended with pain, of loss and sense. *Take away this Plague*, said *Pharaoh*, the outward Scourge, not take away *this hard Heart*, the greatest *Plague* of all. All trouble like

Mercury's Influence, is good only if joyned with a good, but bad if joyned with a bad Planet. The Object of sorrow must be observed, and that will shew the nature of it.

Fourthly, David saw Sin with more hatred, indignation, and abomination than ever: It swell'd like a Toad in his Eyes; he spat it out of his Mouth with utmost abhorrency, resolving to watch for ever after more carefully all his ways. *I considered my ways* (that they were not good) *and turned my Feet unto thy Testimony; I have* (now) *hid thy Word in my Heart, that I may not sin against thee. Turn away mine Eyes from beholding Vanity, and set a watch before the door of my Lips.* Thus *David* saw it, and these effects followed. So then, that sight of Sin, which I account an infallible consequent of renewing Grace, (that none may be mistaken) is and must be timely, kindly, fully and constantly. *Timely*, while the Day of Grace lasteth; as *Judas* saw Sin when it was too late. *Kindly* and willingly, being led and kept in view thereof, by an inward light and power of Grace, fighting against Corruption, and thereby keeping it still in Memory; else, Reprobates may and do often see their Sins here by force, driven to it by Judgments, casting out their Sins, as Mariners do their Goods in a Storm, wishing for them again in a Calm. *Fully* it must be, both for Intention and Extension; for the nature of it, it must be hearty,

heartily, and for the *Object*, it must be universal. Greater and lesser Sins, open and secret Evils, the sins of Youth and riper Age; all must be bewailed, where one is seen, though all are not alike burdensome; some wound and terrifie more than others, according as there was more or less delight in commission. Adultery and Murther did flash most in *David's* Face, bringing along with them into his mind and sight, even his *Birth-sin*. *St. Austin* was much troubled, for that he brake into an Orchard when he was a Boy; and for that he had staid another time, delightfully to behold two Cocks fighting, and that but once: So much he testifies in his Confessions. And if so, how will they be troubled another day, who spend many Days, the most of their Time, in Hunting, Cock-fighting, Bull, or Bear-baiting, turning Recreation into Vocation? How will they be disquieted with the sight of Sin, who rob not only *Orchards* in their School-way, but *Houses*, not of *Men*, but of *God*; as our *Appropriators* and *Simonists* do; of whom the Prophet *Malachy* complains. The trouble of others, should raise some trouble in their Minds, who are guilty in any kind. Sin will have Trouble. I have read of one, who was a Steward to some Gentleman, or a Factor to some Merchant, that was much afflicted, as for other Sins, so for one dash with his Pen, which was done to wrong another.

The redounding guilt of a small Act is heavy. Sin receiveth weight from the purity and justice of God, who forbids it indefinitely; not only great Sins, but all Sins. For if he arm but one Sin against us (which Men may deem little, if not *Venial*) that *little* one is enough to hunt and sink a Man, as far as it is possible for a Creature to fall from God. And as it must be fully, so it must be *constantly*. This sight of Sin, which is nothing but Evangelical Sorrow for Sin, following upon the Spiritual Combat and renewed light of Conscience, is not bounded but by Death: More or less it continueth during Life, and rather increaseth than decayeth, as Love doth. It is not sufficient to see Sin once a Year, (and yet it would be better for some then it is, did they go so far) as our Adversaries require *Confession*; nor once in our Life, only at Death to cast an eye upon it, and bid it adieu, with an O Lord, Lord be merciful, and open unto me, (which good words and seasonable too, are not blamed, but the delaying of so main a Duty till then): Heaven is not to be had usually at so cheap a rate. Satan ordinarily is not so soon vanquished, nor Sin so easily put off: Whosoever thinks it so easie a matter to repent and believe, as that he hath seen and sorrowed enough for Sin, now he may desist from both, did never see nor sorrow for it at all. What *David* here said of himself, is true

true of every renewed Heart, more or less,
during Life,

My Sin is ever before me.

Use 1. The use hereof may be, 1. To discover to you a two-fold Error, to be carefully avoided, because common and dangerous.

First, Of the *Romanists*, who in their Doctrine and Practice, do place Sin rather, before the Ear of the *Confessor*, than before the Eye of the *Committer*: That the one must hear it, is absolutely necessary, without which, there is no Salvation, that the other should see it, is not so; at least not so much prest by them. *Auricular Confession* is more insisted on, than *inward Contrition*: And *Penance* is too far sever'd by them from *Repentance*. We hear much and often of the one, but of the other there is too deep a silence. *Confession* and *Satisfaction* are strictly lookt unto, by such as profess their Religion in earnest, (to give them their due, that nothing may be blamed in them, but what is blameworthy). But *Contrition* and *Sanctification*, this personal fight of Sin, and Evangelical sorrow for it, are not so much urged, neither in their Writings nor Practice, for ought I can learn. However, I dislike not *Confession*, it is a Duty very comfortable and useful; the abuse set aside, I could wish it more frequent among us; but never used in publick or private,

vate, without *Contrition*: Let the Heart accompany the Tongue, else it is the most unfavourable piece of Formality that can be.

Secondly, Of our common People; who deem the worst of such as are thus troubled; condemning *rash judgment* in others, do yet pass the bounds of *Charity* towards them: As if, poor Souls, they only were curst of God, and hated of others, because they are thus pursued by Sin, and baited by Satan, especially if it be on their Sick-bed. Strange it is to hear them cry out upon profession of Religion! as if *Religion* were the worse for it, because her followers are thus affrighted for their good. They will not profess Religion, no, not they, nor be tied to frequent the Church, to perform Duties in private, because such and such are distracted by it; Sure they are out of their Wits, this Book-learning hath made them Mad, else they would never complain and cry out so, that their Sins are ever before them. Why, say they, are not we all Sinners, as well as they? and yet our Sins never trouble us: More is the pity, and greater is their Misery. Poor Souls, you cannot distinguish between trouble for Sin, and senselessnes under Sin; between the desperate pangs of Despair, and the genuine throws of a troubled Mind: Might you not as truly have said the same of *David*, *St. Paul*, and all the rest of God's Saints in every Age, who have passed through this *Wilderness*

derness to Canaan? But in so doing, know, you dishonour God, lay a blemish on his Work, and often condemn *the Generation of the Righteous*. This trouble of Mind being one of the most infallible marks of true Penitency, the Road-way to Heaven for adult Persons, and one of the best signs of this Nature, that any one can see in himself, or desire in his Friend. *Let my Sins, good Lord, be always before me, as David's were: Let all thine be so disquieted here, that so all our Sins may never come in sight at that Day, but be buried in everlasting forgetfulness.*

True it is, some Men may superstitiously endeavour to make the Way to Heaven narrower than indeed it is; but far more there are, who voluptuously endeavour to enlarge it, and make it more broad and easie, than God hath made it; without any such sight of Sin, or trouble about it; crying out, To what end serveth this waste? What needeth all this ado? Cannot Men be saved without this sight of Sin, and sorrow for it? Whether they can or no, I will not stand to determine; sure I am, ordinarily they will not: Till they be brought into the *Wilderness*, they are intractable, indocible; therefore the Lord troubleth them, that they may be willing to be saved. To all such as think otherwise, I should commend these following passages of holy Scripture to be considered, in their most retired Thoughts, *Numb. 32. 23.*

Gen. 4. 7. Psal. 50. 21, 22. Mat. 7. 13, 14. Phil. 3. 11. 1 Pet. 4. 18. *The Righteous shall scarcely be saved: ad presentis Vitæ difficultates debet referri, &c.* saith a judicious Interpreter on that place: Our Race or Warfare here in this World, is like a Voyage by Sea, beset and encountred with many Difficulties, Rocks, Tempests, Pirates, open Enemies, and false Brethren: *Ardua prima via est;* which made St. Paul say, — *If by any means, I may attain unto the Resurrection of the Dead:* A phrase importing difficulty without doubting; he was perswaded he should attain it, but not without the use of such means, and after much struggling. What else is meant by the Wrestling of *Jacob*, the Praying and Fasting of *David*; the Running of *Paul*; the Scruples and Cases of Conscience proposed by the Saints of God frequently, and in great variety, when once they begin to benefit by the Word. *Men and Brethren, what shall we do? Sirs, What must I do to be saved?* And the like Complaints are very frequent, where the Word hath awakened them. The Pains and bitter Sufferings of all our renowned Martyrs, both of the Primitive Times, and in the late *Marian-Days*, do preach unto us the *Straight-way*: The difficulty of obtaining and keeping a grounded persuasion of God's Favour in the free pardon of all our Sins, through the Satisfaction and Intercession of Christ. The Church Militant is a Lilly among

among Thorns, having Enemies ever about her, and her Sins always before her. *Non est ad astra mollis e terris via.* We may not expect to be carried to Heaven on Beds of Down, but *through many Tribulations*; not to go to Paradise through Paradise, a Way throwed with Roses. The *Kingdom of Heaven suffereth Violence*; few arrive in this Harbour without danger and difficulty. It is not so easie a thing to *work out Salvation*, as most deem; and yet through Christ it is easie to all them that receive him.

Thirdly, Hereunto may be added, another Error, though not so common; and that is, when upon these and the like Grounds, Men and Women, enough oppress'd with the thought and burden of their former Sins, will yet be alway poring upon them, till at length they are either intangled with delight in them, or almost overwhelm'd with horror for them. There is an excess in this. Men may look upon their Sins too much, as upon Christ too little. See and consider the Consequence; whereby it cometh to pass, that Men's Hearts are straightned and bound up from the due praise of God, that they walk heavily, and bring an evil report upon the Truth, (as if they were indeed as desolate and uncomfortable a way, as the Devil and his Servants commonly esteem and declare) performing Christian Duties constantly with great uncheerfulness; when as we know the Lord delights
in

in a *cheerful* Servant, and threatneth the contrary. *Because thou servedst not the Lord thy God with joyfulness and gladness of Heart, for the abundance of all things; therefore shalt thou serve thine Enemies, in Hunger, Thirst, and Nakedness, and in want of all things.* Deut. 28. 47, 48. Let your Sins be set before you, that they may humble and drive you, not from God, nor from the sight of God's Grace and free Mercy in Christ; but more out of your selves toward Christ: Endeavour to see your Sins, that you may behold also at the same time, your safety from them in Christ; and let the frequent sight of your Sins be more, and more often accompanied with *Love* than *Fear*.

Use 2. The second Use may be, to shew, in what case they are, whose Sins are *never* before them. *The Harp and the Viol, the Tabret and Pipe, and Wine are in their Feasts, they lie upon the Beds of Ivory, and stretch themselves on their Couches; they eat the Lambs out of the Flock, and Calves out of the Stall, they chant to the sound of the Viol, and drink their Wine in Bowls, they anoint themselves with chief Oynments, and cast away Care: Riches, Pleasure and Honour, with all the Gay-branches of Worldly-glory, are the pleasing objects of their Eyes: They eat, drink, and are merry, driving all Objects from their Minds, which may bring the least disgust, and afford the Body all Pleasures, which may preserve it*

it in a flourishing Health, accompanied with Grace, vigour and vivacity of Senses; but for their Sins, they are *ever behind* them, out of sight, out of mind: but what follows, which one day they must hear, *Thou Fool, this night thy Soul shall be taken from thee, and then, whose shall all these things be?* Suddenly they are cut down, as the *Philistines* and *Belshazzar* were, and sink into the Infernal Pit, in a moment. Such I mean to reprove in this Use,

1. As continue in any known Sin, after discovery, or, that sufficient means for Detection and Conviction, have been afforded.

2. As are busied in setting other Men's Sins before them, but not their own. Only Swine delight to be muzzling in Dung; and Dogs, we know are pleased in licking Sores; Flies pass over the sound parts, and if there be any raw, they light on them; Beetles fly over sweet Flowers, but creep into Dung: Such for condition are those People who are always rubbing on their Neighbour's Sores, and searching the Wounds of others, whilst their own do bleed to Death. Were it not for other Men's sins, Sin would seldom be seen, or spoken of by such; this setteth before him the Sins of that, and that, the Sins of this Man: The *Covetous* Man setteth before him (as odious) the Sin of the *Drun- kard*, and the *Drun- kard* the Sin of the *Cove- tous* Man, and both, the Sins of a third; but
neither

neither sets before him his own Sins. One thing more which is worse, Too many, as may be feared, esteem a chief part of Religion to find faults abroad, and reprovng others, especially Superiours, who are further out of their power to redress, than from their Sight and Hearing; whereby it cometh to pass, that much precious Time is lost and mispent, good Conference hindred, and Christian Meetings frustrated of their main end. I speak not this to shield common Corruptions, and National Abominations from just Censure; nor to debar Men from manifesting their dislike of that, whereby God is dishonoured, and Religion hindred; provided, Men have a Calling thereunto, and power with opportunity to do Good.

3. Such as cannot endure a sound plain-searching Ministry, no more than *Ahab* could endure *Micah*, *Herodias* a *John Baptist*, or *Festus* a *Paul*: Like gaul'd Horses, they cannot endure the rubbing of their Sores. Such blunt Fellows, say they, preach all of Righteousness, of Temperance, and of Judgment to come; we cannot have a *Dalilah*, nor an *Herodias* for them, they will set our *Sins in order before us*, as plainly and boldly, as ever *Nathan* did *David's*, or *Chrysostom Eudoxia's* Luxury, and wanton Dancing. But this know, that if these kind of Men, Sound, Sober, Godly Divines I mean, be an Eye-fore to you, Sin was never before you, as a Burden

Burden to you ; nay, it was not so much as once in your sight, except as an object obscured from the Sense, either by disproportion of Distance, or distemperature of the *Medium*; and then upon such a confused glimmering, your study and endeavour hath been, and is, either with *Gebazi* to deny it, or with *Achan* to hide it from the sight of others, or with *Adam* and *Saul*, to extenuate it, or else to be angry with, if not to plot Revenge against such as did present it; like the Serpent, which they say, the more he is stirr'd, the more he gathers up his Poison to spit at those that move him; and so by degrees you labour to forget it: And how soon may a Man forget that, which he hath neither will, nor delight to remember? But in the Name of Christ, let me entreat all such to know and consider,

First, How grossly the Devil deludes them, whilst for a time, he hideth the ugly face of Sin from them, either with variety of Presents, or some probability of deluding Promises, as of Pleasure, Content, and Secrecy; when as indeed, there ever followeth abundance of bitter Discontent, and an impossibility of Concealment. As he did of old, so he doth still, he shews the Honey, but hides the Gall, offers the Rose, but covers the Pin in it. The Devil deals with Sinners, as deceitful Tradesmen, who shew their Chapmen the better part of the Cloth, and conceal the worst ;

worst : as the *Panther* deals with Beasts, who hides his deformed Head, till his sweet scent hath drawn them into his danger : Till Men have sinned, Satan is a *Parasite* ; when they have sinned, he is found a *Tyrant*. Like a treacherous Host, though he welcome us into the Inn with a smiling Countenance, yet he'll cut our Throats in the Bed.

Secondly, How far they are yet from the truth of Grace, that were never troubled with any sight of Sin, or sense of it. Sorrow through *fear*, is a preparative for Grace. *St. Austin* compares it to the Needle that draweth in the Thred ; it is sometimes introductory by the blessing of God, of a *more excellent Way*. Sorrow for Sin through *Love*, is a consequent of Grace. Strangers to both, are strangers to Grace. They are yet in their Sins.

Thirdly What an heavy Judgment this dead and benumbed Conscience is ; it never seeth Sin, never grieves for Sin, never prizeth Christ, but goeth on in Sin, day after day, without feeling weight, or fearing smart. A wild Beast while asleep, seems very tame and gentle, but when awaked, it begins to shew it self, by flying at the Face. Your Consciences are now asleep, but God will one day awake them, when they will never again afford you one day or hour of rest. Though for a while you live in Mirth, swim in the sweet waters of Pleasures, and having despised

despised the Immortal *Manna*, lay out all your care to stuff your Intrails with corruptible Meats, and Conscience letteth you alone : Though you Feast to day, like *Nabal*, and make your selves glad, yet there is an *Abigail*, a Conscience, which to Morrow will tell you of it, and then your Hearts will die within you, and be like Stones, as cold and as heavy as a Stone within you. This, O Sinner, like a Snake shall hiss in thy Bosom, and bray thee like a Fool in a Morter, as it were with a Pestel, and beat and distress thee for ever. This is the Moth that getteth into the Cloth and eateth it. *When thou with rebukes do'st correct Man for Iniquity, thou makest his Beauty to consume away, like as when a Moth fretteth a Garment.* Psal. 39. 11. This will make thy Face gather blackness, and thy Spirit be overwhelm'd for evermore. This is unavoidable to all that live and continue in Sin, without a fight and trouble for it.

Fourthly, That the Lord will one day set all their Sins in order before them, in their proper Colours, both for number and nature ; Sins of Infancy, Youth, and riper Years ; Sins of commission, and careless omission ; especially presumptuous Sins, and those of positive Infidelity, 'Impenitency, unthankfulness for Christ, and unfruitfulness under the Means ; all these will come upon them all together, crying out, that all the World shall hear and know, *we are yours, and you must*

must own us ; when there will be neither way to escape, nor time to plead. Who so is wise, will consider these things, and he shall understand to conclude it far better, to see Sin now than hereafter ; now, while it may be pardoned, rather than hereafter when it must be punished.

Use 3. Thirdly, What Comfort and Encouragement may this Discourse afford to all in David's Case. They have sinned grievously, and their Sins are ever before them ; now, not so much out of Fear, as out of Love, not by constraint but willingly. They may be assured, and ought to be perswaded of their being in a state of Grace ; although many of them cannot quiet their Hearts to believe it. Their manner is, to frequent solitary Places, to be alone, to meditate of the Lord's Holiness and Goodness, ever and anon reflecting with detestation upon their own actual Sins, and habitual Uncleaness ; then they complain, sigh, and cry, as if there were no hope of safety for them. What, say they, can such as we be pardoned and saved ? We, that have committed such Sins, abused such Mercies, and trampled under feet such great Salvation ! We, that have such hard Hearts, impure Natures, Eyes full of Adultery, every object yielding fuel to this Fire ; and are daily followed with the memory of so many Sins ! Whose thoughts by Day,

Day, and dreams by Night, are sufficient evidences of a cursed disposition? That can do nothing but Sin, Day nor Night? O heavenly Case! O wretched Condition! *Who shall deliver?* Or, who can persuade us that it is possible? &c. When indeed, this sight of Sin, and trouble for it, is one ground of Hope, a mark of Grace, and a fruit of God's Love. Come therefore *let us reason together*; say the worst against your selves, (for so I know you will) let all out; say, you see your Sins for Number innumerable, for Nature heinous, and crying; and for Weight insupportable, even to corporal Weakness, to Paleness and Fainting; accompanied with strange Fears and Consumptions of the Body (this is possible); say you feel the burden of unclean Hearts and Eyes (usually they go together) daily and hourly; that you cannot think without Sinning, nor look without Lusting, in sudden motions arising from every Creature, any way capable of such a Passion; no, nor sleep without filthy Dreams, symptoms of an impure Heart: Say you are ready to sink every moment, under fear of Despair, or Apostacy, by reason of the multitude and pressing constancy of all the former: Was not *David*, a Man after God's own Heart, was not penitent *David* thus affected, pursued and troubled, after his Pardon was obtained and assured to him? His Sin was ever before him, and yet he was then

in a state of Grace. Be not discouraged; only be careful to tread in his Steps, and you shall find his Success.

Quest. How may we know whether we see our Sins savingly, as David did, or no?

Ans. By divers Marks it may be discerned; as,

First, If you see Sin in it self, as it is Sin, and as abstracted from Concomitants, viz. Shame, and Pain. If you loath it, and your selves for it, because it is so opposite to the holy and pure Nature of God; and if the bent of your affection be against it, as the greatest evil; that you desire freedom from Sin above all other Boons; if you be weary of it, to fear and hate it more than the Devil, desiring it may be apprehended and killed at every Sermon you hear; resolving howsoever to leave all, whatever come: If it be thus with you in some good measure, it is a good sign you see Sin aright.

Secondly, If you see Sin so, as that for it, you cannot see, to remember any of your weak performances of holy Duties, since your Conversion. *This one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth to those things which are before, I press to the Mark,* saith blessed Paul. David fasted and prayed, sacrificed and sung Psalms, stood up for the Church, and relieved the Poor, &c. But none of these are now thought on to be mentioned, his Sin only is ever before him.

Our

Our best Works in a state of Grace, are so far from meriting, that sometimes they will not come in to yield a Man any comfort in this Case; they are full of failings, impure and imperfect. There are more threds of Copper than of Gold, in the best Web we weave: *Our very Righteousness is as a filthy Garment*: While Sin comes in full and perfect, and so weighs down the Scale; that our good Deeds are not in memory when Sin is before us: If it be so with you, it is another good sign.

Thirdly, If Sin be heavy to you, all other Crosses and Troubles are light in comparison, and more easily born. *David* was grievously afflicted, by the rebellion of *Absalom*, and the death of *Amnon*, with the occasion thereof; yet it is not said, that these were before him, he was comforted concerning them; but his Sin was ever before him: All the Sufferings and Evils in the World could not so much affect him. *St. Paul* went through many Tribulations, endured great Sufferings (as may be read, *2 Cor. 11. 23, 24* at large) yet all these Scourges, Prisons, and Persecutions, went not so near his Heart as Sin, even the presence, though not the power of Sin. Though he suffered much, yet we reade not that ever he cried, *Oh! for all*; and yet he doth for Sin; *O wretched Man that I am, who shall deliver me from this body of Sin?* And we reade of *Chrysostom*, when he was

threatned Banishment by *Eudoxia*, said, *Go* tell her, *Nil nisi peccatum timeo*: I fear nothing but Sin. To such a one there is more evil in a drop of Corruption, than in a sea of Affliction. Say then, are all your Burdens nothing to the burden of Sin? It is a good sign.

Fourthly, If you can think somewhat comfortably of Death, and be content and desirous to Die, chiefly for this end to be freed from Sin, with those combats and distractions in Duty following it: That this *ever* may be turned into *never*; that Christ might be as Sin is *now*, *ever before you*: It is a very good sign; and blessed are they which are in this condition: They may be assured in the Name of Christ Jesus, and by the Authority committed to his Ministers, to absolve and heal *Sin-sick-souls*, that all their Sins are done away by Faith in the Blood of Christ; they *shall not die*. He that caused your Sins to be set before your Face, hath cast them behind his own Back. When *Israel* see their own Sins, the Lord seeth no Sin in *Israel*. When the Church complains that she is *Black*, the Lord proclaimeth her, the *fairest among Women*.

Thus would I comfort all those who are in this Condition, that I my self might partake with them in their Consolation. It is my judgment, all the Promises belong to them, and they ought to apply them. So that

that they may say with the Apostle, *It is good to be here and build Tabernacles*, to shield us from the roaring Lion, and our own Fears pursuing us.

Use 3. To close up all, in the last place, by way of *Instruction*: From what hath been said, you may learn some Duties, most needful to be practised by you, *viz.*

First. To draw back Sin (which else will keep out of sight and memory till the day of Death, or Judgment) as *Joab* did *Abner*, to kill him, even all your Sins, for the kinds of them, spare none, from the first that was imputed, to the last that was committed by you, and set them *in order before you*, either by your Memory, or the help of a Note-book, so far forth as God shall enable you, particularly to recall, and give them their Deaths-wound, by the application of Christ's Death. It is conceived *Job* did so, when he said, *He could not answer for one of a thousand.* It is manifest in *David*, and reported of that holy Martyr, *Mr. Bradford*, that he kept a *Diarie*, or a Debt-book of Receipts and Expences, between God and his own Soul. It is a course full of Comfort and Profit: Hereby it will come to pass, that when a Man draweth nigh to his Journeys-end, he shall have nothing to do, but to give good Counsel, to pray and die. Now that you may so do, know this to be one main difference between Nature

and Grace; the one seeth Sin *ever*, the other seeth it *never*, or to no purpose. *Nature* is ever boasting of Innocency, of good Deeds, and of good assurance of Salvation without any doubting. *O God, I thank thee, I am not as other Men are, Extortioners, Unjust, Adulterers,* or as this Publican: *I fast twice a Week, &c.* Luke 18. 11. *Non vulnera sed munera ostendit.* He shews not his Want, but his Worth. While Grace, most complains of Sin, of defects and imperfections in the best Duties. Even the Righteousness of gracious Souls, appears in their sight, like the Moon full of spots. A penitent Publican dares not lift up his Eyes towards Heaven, but beats his Breast and crys, *O God, be merciful to me, a Sinner!* even the chief of Sinners. Though he is high in his Priviledges, yet how low is he in his Affections? *Lord, I am Hell, thou art Heaven,* said that holy Man.

Secondly, Be thankful for this sight of Sin, and testifie this your thankfulness by a timely use of the Means, to finish what is begun. Means, I say, of Inspection, Meditation, and Prayer. Of *Inspection* into the Glass of the Law. This is that Light which discovers those Corruptions which lie unknown in the darkness of Ignorance, and makes them appear in their due shape and proportion. That which seemed but as a Mote, will now be judged as a Mountain, and that to be Sin, which before look'd as Righteousness. Here-
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by you will see much to be shamed, to confess
and be ashamed of, nothing to boast and glo-
ry in. Of Meditation after every Exercise;
and therein be frequent and constant. Read-
ing and Hearing without Meditation, is like
weak Phylick which will not work. It is
not taking in of Food, but the Stomach con-
cocting it, which makes it turn into Blood
and Spirits; so it is not the taking in of any
Truth at the Ear, but the meditating it
(which is the concoction thereof in the
Mind) makes it nourish. Be frequent in
Meditation. Press your Conscience with
Particulars, saying with deep Sorrow, These
are my Oaths, my Carnal Sports, and un-
lawful Pastimes, which now terrifie more
than ever they delighted me: This is my
Luxury, my Pride and Impurity: This is my
Blindness and Hardness, Hypocrisy and Sa-
cilegious Vain-glory, which is so much
struck at from Press and Pulpit: I am the
Man, and my sins are *ever before me*. Unto
this effect let your Meditation be raised and
continued. And lastly, Use the exercise of
frequent and fervent Prayer, in private to
your offended God, that he would not only
put away your Sins, but also wash you
thoroughly, and restore you the joy of his Sal-
vation. Be instant, and the Lord will not
deny; *You shall reap, if you sown not.*

Thirdly, Your duty is, to set the Media-
tor always before you at the same time. To

see Sin without Christ, will drive you to despair; and to see Christ without Sin, may cast you upon Presumption; or at least, occasion you to undervalue Christ, and not prize him so highly as he deserves. Labour to see both together. Set Sin on one hand, and Christ on the other, as a King, a Priest, and a Prophet; as a *King* to rule you, as a *Prophet* to teach, and as a *Priest* to sacrifice and satisfie for you, and all yours under Covenant. Then by an appropriating Act of Faith, receive and apply all his *Doctrine* to inform you, his *Government* to subdue and bring you unto Self denial; his *Satisfaction* and *Intercession* to prevail for you; that his *Obedience* may be accepted for your Disobedience, his Meritorious Sufferings for your Sins, and that with his stripes you may be healed.

Object. But alas, I see my Sins so much and so often, that I cannot, I dare not, apply any Promise, I know not with what face to look upon Christ, so abused, and even crucified by me!

Answer. True it is, and I believe a Christian may look upon his Sins in some Sence too much, and pore upon them too long, and so stand in his own light, become an hindrance to himself; especially then, when he shall dwell upon Duties as if they were his Saviour, and hope for acceptance, by equalizing his Sorrow to his Sins; when he looks on them so, as that they deter and keep him from Christ. This is a fruit of Self-

Self-pride, and followed with continual doubts and much uncheerfulness. Whoever studieth to be rich in Sorrow and Self-denial, before he will take Christ, doth not understand God's Way and Method, nor rightly apprehend and prize the Treasure offer'd in and by Christ. If you had no Sin, or if you had Victory over all, if you could only wash away all your filth with Tears, then you would believe; but then I tell you, you had no need of Christ. *The whole need not a Physician, but they that are sick.* When you are most mean and vile in your own Eyes, when you are filthy and wounded, sick unto Death, then you have most need of Christ, and most right unto him. Most need, I say, because of *danger*: As it is with a weary Swimmer, who upon a Ship-wrack, being cast into the Sea to shift for himself, is there tost with Billows up and down, and almost drowned, till at length he espieth a Bough reached out to him from the Shore, which he readily and thankfully (without any scruples or doubts of his own unworthiness to have such a favour) laieth hold on, and is safe. Thus it is, and should be with sinful Man. For in truth this Swimmer is Man, cast into the Ocean of Legal Fear and Trouble; Christ is *the Tree of Life*, offer'd by the Father to every one that needeth, and will receive him

m. He came not to call the Righteous, but Sinners, of all sorts, to Repentance and Life. And as they have most need of him, so they have most right unto him, because of the Covenant, wherein all the Promises are made over to such. Come, let us reason together: and though your Sins were as Crimson, or Scarlet, I will make them as white as Snow, or Wool. Isa. 1. 18. Yea, All ye that are weary and heavy-laden, come unto me, and I will give you rest, Mat. 11. 28. To him that is athirst, I will give of the Water of Life freely. Rev. 21. 6.

For, this fight of Sin which is here discoursed of, argueth Union by Faith and the Spirit, to be begun, and a reparation of Christ's Image in you, which by reflection causeth it; and then not to believe, not to receive him, not to give your selves to him, that you might rest wholly upon him, is the greatest Sin that ever you committed. Think not to lessen, by increasing your Sins. O add not this to all, and above all the rest. Refuse not so rich a Marriage because you are poor, mean, and deformed: If your Husband like to take you with all your Faults, as in earnest he offereth, why will you stand against your own Preferment? If you be mean and low, he will raise and advance you; if you be poor, he will enrich you; if you be deformed and loathsome to

Behold, he can and will bestow Beauty upon you. Who will refuse such an Husband? that bringeth all things with him, and requires nothing but Poverty and Self-denial; a willingness to part with our own Rags, and to put on his new Robes. If you be filthy, he will wash you in his own Blood, from the stain and guilt of Sin: If you be Naked, he will cloath you with his own Righteousness, and seat you above Angels. Briefly, be willing to take Christ, and you shall want nothing. Give your selves to him freely, fully, deliberately, and he will prove a *Jesus* to you, to save you from your Sins, which else will be ever before, and upon you in their full weight. Did Men know and weigh the Treasure hid in him, called *unsearchable Riches*, there would be no need to persuade any: They would take him more greedily, than ever the hunted Hart did the running Water.

And now, to all who have travelled through this *Wilderness* of fear and sorrow for Sin, and are come even to the Borders of *Canaan*; in the Name of God the Father, I the most unworthy of all his Ministers, do offer unto you *Christ Jesus*, with all his Merits: take and apply them, for all are yours, you are Christ's, and Christ is God's. And thus I have brought

brought you to the Fountain and Dispenser
of true Happiness, where I leave you,
with the rest of God's travelling Saints,
to rejoyce in their Way, with Joy unspeak-
able and full of Glory.

*Blessed is he whose Transgression is forgiven,
and whose Sin is covered.*

F I N I S.

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